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THE RELEASE OF MOSLEY

The public feeling roused by Mosley's release is as significant as anything that has happened in Britain since 1940, and it may have far-reaching results on the political future of this country.

First take the case put by the Home Secretary. 18B was an unhappy necessity; it threw over the rule of law under which men may not be kept in gaol without charge and without trial. A basic principle of individual liberty was put aside for the time because Britain was in danger. In any case, 18B, as it stands, would lapse at the end of the war, and, logically, if the national danger has passed, the reason for detaining Fascists under 18B has gone. They could be tried, but if they were not found guilty of any offence, they would have to be released. To release them as a group at the end of the war would look too much like a demonstration: Mr. Morrison prefers the alternative of releasing them gradually. He does not, of course, say that the public danger is altogether passed or that he feels that the time has come to release Mosley without conditions. The implication is that Mosley would have been kept in gaol until the last, had it not been that medical grounds provided a special reason for his earlier release. The doctors' advice was that Mosley would get worse and might even die in gaol, and that was a responsibility Mr. Morrison did not wish to face. Therefore, as the Minister who had to take the decision, he ordered the release and was personally prepared to answer for his action to the House of Commons.

It is possible to pick holes in this logical case. Mosley could have been as well treated in a prison hospital as at home. It is not true that precautions against anti-social activities can be as effectively taken in a man's own home as when he is under lock and key. But none of these considerations have much affected the public mind. The surge of feeling that has swept up from the factories into Parliament Square, and which has prompted resolutions from several of the great Trade Unions and led the National Council of Labour to repudiate Mr. Morrison—this powerful agitation springs from the fact that Mosley is a symbol of all that the working classes in this country hate most. They remember the provocative marches in the East-end, the Olympia thuggery, and the Hyde Park demonstrations. There are Jews—and workers who defended them—who still bear the marks of Blackshirt violence.

There have always been two main views of this war. The first that it is a national struggle for power provoked only by the restless ambitions of Germany. The second view is that the German form of Fascism is merely the worst and that the struggle is at root ideological. Thus, according to many Members of the House of Commons, and some sections of the middle-class, when the war against Germany is formally at an end, the task will be done. They expect to go back to the same way of life, hope for good jobs and a quiet Britain. Millions in the factories and Services see the matter quite differently. Fascism is a doctrine which arises from the failure of our present social order to deliver the goods to common people. It is not exclusively a German disease; it began in Italy, it is to be found in a virulent form in many other countries of Europe, was partly responsible for the destruction of France, and was attempting to obtain a hold in Britain before the war. It deliberately cultivates anti-Semitism as a weapon of disintegration; it aims in Britain, as elsewhere, at nothing less than the total destruction of all our liberties and at a totalitarian dictatorship. Scotched in 1940, it is again rearing its head. On that analysis victory over German Fascism does not finally destroy the enemy, either in Europe or in Britain. Sir Oswald Mosley, in the language of the A.E.U., is "the personification of Hitler and of all those foul and beastly deeds and ideas" against which our soldiers and workers are fighting. And the danger of Fascism in England may be greater than ever after the war.

Communists have, of course, been active in organising petitions and demonstrations, but the immediate reaction of the Transport Workers could not be attributed to Communism, and there is, indeed, ample evidence that the feeling was spontaneous and powerful throughout the country. Indeed, the Communists have strongly urged that no agitation must lessen production or hamper the war effort. The Home Secretary, in short, stumbled upon one of those symbolic acts which focus for the ordinary man tendencies which disturb him, but about which he has hitherto seemed powerless to act. He adds two and two together and perhaps makes more than four. Why was the Government playing with people like Darlan and Badoglio? Were we really fighting a war to restore reactionary governments in Greece and Yugoslavia and elsewhere? Why did it take so long to appreciate Russia's part in the war and to urge agreement with Stalin? Again why does Mr. Churchill refuse decisions on the social issues which bulk so large in the minds of people to whom the war has meant the daily risk of death, the hardships of conscription, long hours and the break-up of their family life? Why does Mr. Churchill refuse to see a deputation of Civil Servants Unions? Why are appointments made by the Government increasingly reactionary? Why is a man like Mr. Lennox-Boyd, whose record during the Spanish War is an outrage to all progressive sentiment, appointed as Under-Secretary to the key Ministry of Aircraft Production? Again, these are all disquieting incidents, but not easy to fasten on as the focus of action. The release of Sir Oswald Mosley comes as a climax. Here is a definite case that crystallises the view that in high quarters Fascism as such is not regarded as the enemy.

Clearly Mr. Morrison under-estimated the public explosion. He made an error of judgment in thinking that to act when Parliament was not sitting and to justify himself afterwards would be the least provocative method. The effect has been the opposite. It has given time for public feeling to grow and to be effective in Westminster and in particular within the Labour Party and Trade Unions. The Trade Unions hate Fascism as such; they regard Mosley as the man who hoped to destroy the Trade Unions in Britain, as Mussolini destroyed them in Italy and Hitler in Germany. One unfortunate result is likely to be that Mr. Morrison has lost his chance of leading the Labour Movement. What its effect will be on the political truce and on the future of the National Government and the alignment of forces in this country, it is as yet too soon to say.

Unsolved Riddle

Mr. Attlee's explanation of the tragic blunders in the Aegean, now completed by the loss of Samos, remains unsatisfactory. Defending—with obvious discomfort—strategy for which, in all probability, he was personally not responsible, the Commander-in-Chief, Middle East, has succeeded only in increasing public mystification. Claiming, with unconvincing optimism, that the enemy's losses equalled our own (numbers unstated), General Wilson declared that we had risked placing garrisons "in the air" on Cos, Leros and Samos because we had hoped to secure Rhodes. How? By means of the Italians on the Island? But these troops capitulated to the Germans within a few days of the Badoglio armistice. By assault launched from Cyprus, Haifa or Egypt? No such attempt, so far as we know, was ever made. Kept ignorant of so many of the facts, the public is bound to be left with the impression that plans for an offensive in the Aegean must have been framed and set partly in motion, but that some deficiency in the resources needed for the full implementation of the plans arose, unforeseen, and made nonsense of the scheme. Shortage of shipping? Presumably; for of troops there must have been plenty. Was shipping originally allocated to the Middle East suddenly absorbed by other theatres of war? If so, the authorities responsible for global planning seem to have made a series of miscalculations.

The Dust Settles in Lebanon

Exaggerated though the earlier reports of rioting may have been, there is no doubt that the demonstrations that marked the release of President Khoury, the Premier, and his Cabinet, were genuine and widespread. The French National Committee was wise to replace M. Helleu by M. Chataigneau, as acting delegate-general, and to recognise that there was no possibility of forming an alternative puppet administration. Fifty-two out of a total of fifty-four seats in the Lebanese Parliament are held by representatives pledged to the independence demands. The French, at first reinstated only the President. Now the Cabinet is back again; the French hopes for a Ministry which would adopt a more moderate nationalism have been dashed. This is understandable in view of the large majority the old Government won in the August elections. The position now is not essentially different from the days before the Ministers were arrested, except that there is a lot more ill-feeling and resentment. The elements of crisis remain. General Catroux, under pressure from the Allies in Algiers, has succeeded in calming the storm, but not in reconciling the Lebanese to anything but complete independence. Just what this independence would mean in the long run remains doubtful, for behind this Lebanese dispute lies the British determination to secure the strategic domination of the Eastern Mediterranean while resurgent French imperialism fears lest France is to be left a very minor partner in running the Mediterranean and Middle East. British interests in Lebanon are not happily represented by General Spears. The Americans, the British and the French are all rivals for economic and political power in the Arab world. The recent visits of certain Arab dignitaries to this country and the United States have no doubt been noticed by General de Gaulle, who believes that his power in France is increased every time that he stands as the champion of French rights against the supposed encroachments of America and Britain.

The New Appointments

The cordiality of the Moscow Conference and the forthcoming meeting of Churchill, Stalin and Roosevelt are significant, above all, because the three Allies created permanent organs to hammer out a common policy for Europe. All the more disappointing that the men chosen for this task of permanent co-operation are not the most impressive available. The European Advisory Council will not be a planning body at all, and though we do not doubt that Mr. Gusev will be a successful ambassador and that Mr. Strang, with ambassadorial rank, will remain an able official, we hoped that the new body would be of a more independent and important type. The Italian Council is an even graver disappointment. Nothing whatever has come of the democratic principles and promises published after the Conference. What, in fact, Anglo-American policy has made in Italy is a deadlock behind which the king sits firmly entrenched. The nominations of the new Council mean that the same men will stick in the same ruts. Here, once more, is Mr. Murphy, who first brought Darlan to Algiers, and here once more is Mr. Harold Macmillan, who bore his share in every phase of the North African mess. These names scrawl ditto over the map of Italy. To Algiers meanwhile goes Mr. Duff Cooper, whose qualification for the post unhappily includes a record of tactless indiscretions. It is now a rule of public life that such appointments fall to Mr. Churchill's friends. This scandal is becoming monotonous.

Finish with Birching

After the hurly-burly that surrounded the Hereford case, Lord Justice Goddard's inquiry has the effect of anticlimax. The Divisional Court that quashed the conviction had, it is clear, inadequate evidence before it; and though the irregularities of procedure on which the appeal from the Juvenile Court was based did occur, the inquiry established that "everyone concerned not only had the opportunity of putting before the Court all that they desired to submit, but in fact did so." Lord Justice Goddard was satisfied that, irrespective of the confusion about the pleas, "the finding of guilt involved no miscarriage of justice." We are glad to hear it. And if there were mistakes and confusion on both sides it is right that it should be so stated. Two main issues emerge from the case. First, it is clear that much of the trouble arose from the inaccurate record of the pleas, entered by a young assistant to the Clerk of the Court. The magistrates appear to have been persuaded against their memories that the court record was correct. In fact it was wrong. The moral is that only fully trained lawyers should act as permanent officials. There should also be a system of checking the entries in the court record so that the signature of the magistrate should be something more than mere routine. Secondly, the dilemma of birching was brought out sharply. Either the boy must wait for the appeal, with the sentence hanging over his head, perhaps for weeks (which, as Lord Justice Goddard said, would be bad for the child), or the birching must be done at once. And once carried out, appeal is meaningless. Thus a new argument against birching is added to the formidable, indeed final, argument of the Royal Commission on corporal punishment, which reported before the war. Birching is condemned by common sense and experience.

Glasshouses

The surprise in the Report of the Committee of Inquiry into the conditions of detention barracks was the contrast exposed between the military and naval barracks. Most of the tales of inhumanity and cruelty have dealt with Army "glasshouses." Now it appears that conditions are much more rigorous in the Naval barracks. Both the Admiralty and the War Office will have to be busy if the recommendations of the Report are adopted. The staff question has long been a serious one. The civilian prison officer must undergo a period of severe training before appointment: are we to understand that the establishment of a training school for the Military Provost Staff Corps means that at last a low medical category will no longer be the sole qualification required? The Chatham case suggested serious defects in the medical system in force in detention camps. Now it is proposed that there shall be at least one whole-time M.O. and sick-quarters provided where they do not exist. It is sensible that the Committee should recommend that offenders serving long sentences should be transferred to civil prisons, but are all military prisoners to continue receiving the same treatment? There are important differences that need special arrangements, between habitual criminals, men sentenced for civil or for military crimes, and first offenders.

Further, the method of inspection is obviously unsatisfactory. Visiting magistrates are supposed to inspect civilian prisons frequently and unexpectedly. Similar officials with similar duties are needed in Military Detention Barracks. Complaints should be heard in confidence without fear of victimisation or interference. As it is, the men are paraded before an inspecting Military Officer and asked if there are any complaints, but the commandants view these with such disfavour that men with genuine grievances may be deterred from voicing them. Welfare arrangements in detention barracks are neglected. There would be far less feeling among the men that they were hopeless outcasts without opportunity to protest against harsh or unfair treatment if chaplains or persons on the approved panels of prison visitors were allowed to see them privately. And are not the hours of the staff too long? Subject to a severe discipline themselves, they tend to reflect their mental and physical fatigue in their attitude to the prisoners.

Sir Stafford Cripps on the Future

Sir Stafford Cripps, who has said little of late except on immediate war issues, joined the growing band of projectors about reconstruction in a speech last week-end. It is not too easy to understand what he had in mind. Demanding a Christian basis for reconstruction, and "refusing to admit that it is only by revolution and bloodshed that changes can be brought about in our social and economic conditions," he argued in favour of a "severely practical" programme of reconstruction, of such a character that "all genuinely progressive minded citizens" could support it. "Full employment" was the keynote of what he went on to say. "No principles of Capitalism or Socialism need or must interfere with the complete liberty of action of the Government in making sure that there is full employment. To me," he summed up, "that is the cardinal point." On this basis he insisted on the maintenance of a large measure of State control over economic affairs, but argued that this would not be inconsistent with the continuance of private enterprise in a number of spheres. "The important matter to plan is not who produces but what is produced. We have found that in wartime." Control of financial policy and of investment Sir Stafford held to be essential; and "monopolies in vital industries must be run by the Government through appropriate organisations." Most of this is very like what Mr. Morrison has been saying; but the political tone is a little different. Sir Stafford has no party nowadays; and it is natural that he should think of gathering all the "men of good-will" behind a policy which Mr. Morrison envisages more in terms of his own party. The programme, however, is essentially the same; and, what is more, we feel pretty sure it is what the country wants.

PARLIAMENT: Out Goes Who?

Wednesday, noon.

Our phlebitic *führer* (with a small *f*) certainly swelled up at last into Major Crisis. The House reassembled on Tuesday in tense, expectant, impatient mood; there was little disposition to linger even over Grigg's questions (usually one of the most engaging side-shows), although they were concerned with Service matters of great popular interest, such as the demotion of injured personnel. There was a general feeling of "Let's get on to Morrison"; and also of "I suppose Herbert'll get away with it again." Pritt raised a murmur of laughter by a new supplementary—to a question on equal pay for men and women Civil Servants—on "the Govern-

ent's demonstration of equality between the xes in the case of Sir Oswald and Lady Mosley." Morrison's statement was wordy and repetitive, t delivered with that man-to-man forth-ghtness which has helped him in the past. ot a time it did indeed look as if he were going "get away with it again." There were a w cheers, mainly Tory, for his point about t letting anyone die in detention unnecessarily. he complexities, however, in which he interwove s two main arguments (the security and the edical), and the elaborate stress laid on the minence of the doctors concerned, began to all; a sense of unreality and even of ausea supervened. It was a legalistic and arren performance—a victory of Home Office gic over psychological insight and political nse. The impulsive and erratic Commander ocker-Lampson blundered into a true inter-retation of the emotions of the demonstrators utside when he cried that Mosley would t have been let out "if he had not been a illionaire." Labour Members, save for a w of the more *ventre-à-terre* or foot-on-rung, ere distinctly uneasy. "Ah don't like it . . . h don't like it," the most homespun and de-endable were saying. For one thing, they ondered why Mosley could not have been ansferred to a rural detention-camp, where he uld have got the complete rest and the vigorous ercise which Morrison mystifyingly said were th necessary. Nor was Herbert Morrison's personal touchiness thought attractive. There was too much "I" and "me" about him. "Cocky little beast!" said one of the Tories who hear-heared him most throatily.

Once more Procedure intervened to hamper proceedings. The time for Prorogation in Another Place had been prearranged; so Mr. Speaker had to curtail the Mosley supplementaries when a number of Members were still rising at each opportunity. The *Daily Express*, anxious, apparently, to put as rosy a halo on Morrison as it could, misrepresented the situation by reporting, as though everyone were satisfied with his statement, that "there were fewer supplementary questions than had been anticipated." There were several demands for a full debate; when Aneurin Bevan spoke of the "universal interest" in this matter, only two or three Tories had the temerity to advertise their remoteness from their constituents by saying "No." The frustration felt by Members, unable to air their views on this occasion, and obliged by the Prorogation to go home at lunch-time, was fully shared by the crowds outside, who at first refused to believe that the House had risen and naturally did not understand why.

Amid all this fuss, His Majesty's Most Gracious Speech was pleasantly sedative—but also, to mix a metaphor, pregnantly sedative. It is to be hoped that the brood will not miscarry, or be still-born. The abortionists are ready with their blunt instruments.

PONTIFEX MINOR

"IZVESTIA" AND FEDERATION

ONG years in which the Western Powers ubbed, abused and boycotted the Soviet Union ve left in Moscow an inheritance of suspicion hich is always natural, often justified and some-nes misdirected. Just as frank discussion in oscow itself has produced good diplomatic sults between Foreign Ministers, and should oduce long-distance agreement at the meeting Stalin, Churchill and Roosevelt, so we believe ank discussion between newspapers is the only y of removing damaging misconceptions. It with this thought in mind and with no desire cept to reach real understanding with the oviet Union, that we reply to some misguided marks which appeared in *Izvestia* on November th.

Izvestia rebukes us (and the *Economist* for a ther different remark) because we read into the oscow Agreement that Russia was no longer fundamentally opposed to the formation of y and every grouping among the States of stern and Central Europe." Well, the cts are these. A variety of schemes for deration in Eastern and Central Europe have en publicised in Britain and in America in cent years. The motives behind these pro-osals, from Clarence Streit's *Union Now* to the test ebullition of Polish romanticism, have been ixed. At their best they have arisen because rious students of the facts agree that security d economic well-being are alike impossible in Europe in which small States that cannot stand themselves claim an illusory sovereignty and fer constant invitations either to open aggression to the intrigues of capitalist interests which ploit the weakness of their governments. A cond reason, which has appeared all too plainly the last three years, has been the desire of iled governments, often out of touch with the sistance movements in their own countries, to eate unions which would, in fact, be hostile to e Soviet Union, and perhaps act as the *cordon nitaire* conceived by Clemenceau and Foch the end of the last war. Because, to quote the ords of *Izvestia*, so many of these proposals in fact "definitely emit the rotten smell of is long-since bankrupt policy," the NEW TATESMAN AND NATION has consistently refused support any and all of them. We could quote dozen occasions in the past few months in hich we had denounced proposed Polish, ugoslav and other schemes of federation on the ound that they were aimed at the Soviet Union. By a coincidence the very pen which wrote the words that have caused such disquiet in the office of *Izvestia* had just written of these schemes in the very phraseology adopted by *Izvestia*. "It smells of the *cordon sanitaire*." A case of telepathy? No, but a proof that this journal understood, as *Izvestia* understood, the implications of such schemes and knew that the U.S.S.R. was justified in rejecting them.

Izvestia asks where in the Moscow Agreement there is any justification for our suggestion that the U.S.S.R. was no longer "fundamentally opposed to the formation of any and every grouping among the States of Eastern and Central Europe?" It concludes that this deduction was the product of our imagination, was dishonestly inspired by some desire to revive the *cordon sanitaire* and came from "lack of goodwill to march in step with the Moscow Conference." The reply is that our phrase was an inescapable deduction from a sentence in the Moscow Agreement, and that *Izvestia's* own article confirms our statement.

Let us first look at the wording of the Moscow Agreement. After asserting that Austria must be independent, it said that this independence will

> open the way for the Austrian people themselves, as well as those neighbouring States which will be faced with similar problems, to find that political and economic security which is the only basis for lasting peace.

These words (which are not quoted in the *Izvestia* article) have no meaning unless, as we have said, they show that Moscow is not "fundamentally opposed to the formation of any and every grouping" between Austria and her neighbours. Indeed, in the next breath after scolding us for making this suggestion, *Izvestia* inconsequently goes on to state the conditions in which Moscow would, in fact, not oppose the formation of regional groupings. It agrees with the NEW STATESMAN AND NATION in demanding that any such groupings should be based on a realistic appreciation of the facts. Correctly, and not at any point at variance with us, *Izvestia* points out that at the end of the war European relations will be in a state of flux and uncertainty, and that time will be needed for the new States "to find their bearings in newly-formed relations with neighbouring and other States." It adds that these new relations must be of the choice of the people themselves and not imposed from without. "So important a step as forming a federation with other States and possibly renouncing part of one's own sovereignty is permissible only through the free and thoroughly considered expression of the will of peoples." Further, says *Izvestia*, "it cannot be considered that *émigré* governments of small countries occupied by the Germans" are sufficiently representative of their people "to decide so important a question as that of federation." It is precisely for these reasons that the NEW STATESMAN AND NATION has rejected such schemes and thereby earned the furious abuse of various organs in this country which specialise in propaganda on behalf of these *émigré* governments.

When we examine all the conditions laid down by *Izvestia* what do they amount to? First, complete agreement with us in rejecting schemes directed against the Soviet Union, and hatched without consultation with the resisting peoples in the occupied countries. Secondly, complete agreement with us that considerations of "political and economic security" will in fact demand further regional groupings, in the case of countries like Austria, which as the Moscow Agreement pointed out, cannot stand alone. Thirdly, *Izvestia* makes plain—and this was perhaps the reason for its polemic—these conditions cannot exist until after liberation. That is surely obvious, but not in our view a reason why those who understand these conditions should not discuss this important subject, referred to in the Moscow Conference, in a spirit of calm and goodwill. Indeed if we cannot reach agreement in principle now, we are less likely to do so after the war.

Since we are in substantial agreement, why all this tarradiddle in *Izvestia*? The answer must be that the habit of assuming evil motives on the part of bourgeois papers is so ingrained in Moscow that the journalists of *Izvestia* have not yet discovered that such a thing as honest discussion of questions of joint interest is a possible and desirable result of the Moscow Agreement.

While there was danger that the United States and Britain would fail to collaborate with the Soviet Union in this war, when there was still in fact a risk that the policy of the *cordon sanitaire* could be adopted, Moscow naturally objected to all talks of regional grouping. The Moscow Conference marked the end of such a period. This journal has reiterated on many occasions during the past two years that no settlement in Eastern Europe which was not satisfactory to Moscow was conceivable at the end of this war. To-day that is plain for all to see. We were therefore able to remark in the course of an article, which throughout showed a friendly appreciation of Moscow's now admittedly dominant position, that the U.S.S.R. was now able to consider regional groupings that might before have savoured of an effort to revive the *cordon sanitaire*. Is it not *Izvestia*, rather than the NEW STATESMAN AND NATION, that has failed "to march with the Moscow Conference"?

If we were in the habit of expressing ourselves in the language of suspicion and vituperation that sometimes mars the otherwise admirable columns of *Izvestia*, we should conclude from their crude misrepresentation of our article that there was not in *Izvestia* that goodwill to work in "harmonious collaboration" (we use its own words) with us in Britain that is demanded by the Moscow Agreement. This, however, is not our conclusion. Rather we deduce that those who write for *Izvestia* are as ignorant of Britain as British journalists have habitually been of the U.S.S.R. Apparently they cannot distinguish between the critical comments of honest friends and the strategic silence of those who have always been their foes. They still adopt an attitude of self-righteousness that assumes that all right is the monopoly of Soviet journalism and that no difference of opinion (in this case imaginary) can arise except from dishonest or sinister motives. We suggest in order that such misconceptions may cease and the collaboration become more harmonious that the editorial staff of *Izvestia* should pay a visit to this country; in the course of conversation and inquiry they would discover which journals are in fact hostile, and which genuinely friendly to the Soviet Union.

THE ECONOMICS OF INTERNATIONAL RECONSTRUCTION

When the war is over it will be necessary first to relieve the pressing immediate needs of the peoples of Europe and then—or as far as possible simultaneously—to provide for the reconstruction of their economic resources, so that they can provide for their own needs, either out of their home production or by way of exchange. So much is now agreed between governments and between the experts who are trying to work out means of carrying out the practical measures which these aspirations demand. Behind both relief and reconstruction problems looms the question of money, which has also a twofold aspect—that of stabilisation of currencies, or at any rate the settlement of the conditions under which one sort of money is to be exchangeable into another, and that of long-term international investment. There is also, in relation to relief, the question how far countries which have some resources are to be made to pay for the relief they get in kind; and in the background there is the vexed and intractable problem of the international debts which the war will leave behind.

On all these matters a great deal is being said just now, especially in the United States. Since the Keynes and White currency plans were published, Lord Keynes and other British experts have been negotiating in America, and they have now brought back we know not what in the way of revised proposals. The Americans have produced, again non-committally, a second White Plan, dealing this time with long-term international investment and embodying proposals for an International Investment Bank under the auspices of the United Nations. At Atlantic City UNRRA has got to work and has put forward a recommendation that the nations of the world shall put up a fund representing 1 per cent. of the national income of each country, to be used for purposes of world relief. At Hot Springs a beginning has been made with the working out of an international policy of improved nutrition, involving agreements between countries for the regulation of the production of, and trade in, primary foodstuffs. A leading American banker, Mr. Fraser, has put forth a project for a huge American gold loan to Great Britain, as part of a mutual agreement for currency stabilisation and common action in economic matters between the two countries. Other Americans have been accusing Great Britain of hatching plots to bring the United States under British financial domination (the humorous touch is never wanting in these affairs). The Dutch and Belgians have signed a mutual agreement which fixes a stable ratio between their currencies and links their two countries closely together in economic policy. The Dutch, the Belgians and the Poles, among others, have been working out long-term plans of post-war economic development. The Czechs have linked proposals for the economic reorganisation of their country with sinister notions about the mass-expulsion of German Czechs from the Sudetenland. Lord Beaverbrook has been working towards an improved British policy for commercial air transport, as a preliminary to negotiations on international air policy with the United States. On every economic front things are moving, for good or ill; and governments and private interests are beginning to think seriously about the shape of economic things to come.

Farthest advanced are the discussions on currency and international relief. On currency it is already plain that the Americans want to restore the gold standard and to secure a British pledge to peg the pound firmly to the dollar. But how can Great Britain possibly accept this? It would mean tying our economic fortunes fixedly to those of the United States, with the certainty of sharing in every American depression and *no* certainty of sharing equally in every American boom. It would force deflation on us whenever deflation occurred in the United States, and would make nonsense of our intention to follow a full employment policy at home. Precautions there must be against unregulated competitive currency depreciation; but the idea that either Great Britain or Continental Europe can begin upon economic reconstruction by pegging its money tightly to the dollar is surely nothing less than fantastic. Such an agreement, were it ever made, would be bound to break down at a very early stage. Fortunately, we are not in any way committed to accept such an agreement; and it is to be hoped that nothing will persuade our Government to fall into that particular trap.

In the matter of international relief, a more promising start has been made, though all the administrative details have still to be worked out. In that of international long-term investment, only the Americans have so far revealed their thoughts. The proposed United Nations Investment Bank is conceived on a large scale, and is clearly intended to be available for really big projects of economic development on the lines of the T.V.A. But its authors have been careful so to draft the scheme as to arouse the least possible criticism from American Big Business, and also so as to suggest that it is to be run on nationalistic rather than international lines. The proposed Investment Bank is to keep off all grass that is regarded as the proper field of private enterprise; and it is to make or guarantee loans only where they are backed also by the guarantee of the Government on whose territory the money is to be spent. Possibly this phraseology does not rule out the financing of international agencies, half-way between public and private enterprise, for the execution of big development projects. But it looks convincingly as if the authors of the plan are thinking mainly in terms of loans to Governments, or to Government-backed private agencies, inside single countries, rather than of economic projects carried out in the territories of two or more neighbouring States.

This is, of course, all of a piece with the sharp reversion to nationalism which marks the recent behaviour of the exiled Governments themselves. A couple of years ago, there was much talk of concerted economic development on a European scale, at any rate in the spheres of transport and power, and perhaps of irrigation and complementary agricultural and industrial planning. But now all that seems to have receded; and even air transport is being thought of mainly in terms of nationally controlled airports and air lines, with little or no provision for actual services to be run by any international authority. Each country, except the Dutch-Belgian group and perhaps the Scandinavians, seems to be making its plans for economic restoration and development on a purely national basis. Some of the great rivers, no doubt, must in the nature of the case be largely under international management; they have been so in the past, and they must be so in future. But there seems to be but little inclination to apply over a wider field the lessons that have been learnt from the control of such river navigations as the Danube.

This, unfortunate as it may be, is not at all surprising; for there exists no political pattern of post-war Europe within which the nations can plan the concerted development of their economic affairs. At one time, it seemed as if the Czechs and Poles might come together to work out common economic plans. Political uncertainties and contributions put a stop to that; and now the two countries are planning apart, and doing so on assumptions which may prove wrong about the territory which will be theirs to plan.

In the midst of these fundamental uncertainties, projects of international investment in the development of the backward areas of Europe can get almost no distance. Take the case of the countries of Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, which have been suffering from aggravated pressure of population on the land. It is clear that these 'countries need a rapid development of manufacturing industries capable of turning out cheap consumers' goods with mainly unskilled labour; a great improvement of communications and of electric power supplies; and a reform of their methods of marketing and agricultural credit supply. But how can plans possibly be made until it is known whether their development is to take place mainly under Western or under Soviet auspices, or both; whether their future markets are to be mainly in the East or in the West; and whether their mutual relations are to be such as will enable them to work together or keep them divided into hostile political camps? Or again, who can plan what these countries ought to produce until it is known what arrangements the victor countries propose to make about their own agricultural production and their policy in respect of agricultural imports—to say nothing of their need to know how far they will be able to depend after the war on Germany as a buyer of their produce and a source of manufactured goods?

All that can be done, until the world political pattern has become plainer, is to make full plans for relief in the difficult period which will immediately follow the war, and for the rest to work out longer-run plans of the broadest and most hypothetical character. Even for such broad planning in the field of international investment it is essential to get some knowledge of the possibility of an agreed basis of action between the Americans on the one hand and the Soviet Union on the other. Where does the United States stand in respect of insistence that investment is to take place mainly through private profit-seeking agencies as against State, or inter-State activities; and where does the Soviet Union stand in respect of the payment of interest on foreign loans granted for use in territories which may come within its sphere of political influence? The Moscow Conference may have discussed such questions, or may have put them severely aside. There is no sign that anything was agreed about them.

Yet it seems plain that, if anything substantial is to be done at the end of the war to strengthen internationalism, it will have to find its expression mainly in the economic sphere. The case for concerted planning in the economic field is indeed overwhelming, as a means both of raising standards of living in the backward countries and getting rid of the scourge of unemployment in the more advanced. A few great countries may be able to play the game of autarkie without disaster, especially if they are strong enough to enforce their will on lesser countries; but a return to economic nationalism would be bound to condemn the less advanced countries to a perpetuation of their state of endemic poverty and permit over-population. To improve their economic situation, these countries must have loans of capital goods from those which are better equipped: to use such loans to good advantage they must work together, making their industries complementary, adjusting their agricultural production to the character of one another's markets as well as of the world market as a whole, co-ordinating their transport services, and co-operating in the development of economic areas which do not coincide with national frontiers. UNRRA may perhaps help them to do this if it is wisely administered; and the Middle East Supply Council has already done something to work out the technique of international administration in the field of supply. But far such international planning cannot go until there is, at any rate, some basic assurance of the political conditions within which the economic adjustments will have to be worked out; and all over Central, Eastern and Southern Europe that is what is lacking. It is therefore indispensable to bring Moscow fully and at once into the discussions about currencies and the future of international investment, as well as to agree on the principles of European settlement. Until this is done, plans, except for relief, are bound to remain largely in the air.

A LONDON DIARY

PEOPLE are really worked up about Mosley's release. I walked down Kingsway and saw the novel spectacle of passers-by readily signing a petition outside Holborn station. I met a prominent Labour stalwart who works in an aircraft factory; he tells me that the whole factory is seething with it. Communists run the organisation, demonstrations, petitions and so forth, but the feeling is spontaneous. (Petitions are said by now to add up to something like five million signatures and to include memorials from girls' schools as well as factories; they have also been collected in shops, buses and so forth. Most of the important factories in the country have now sent resolutions.) At the barber's I said: "But if the doctors say that Mosley is likely to die and he is to be let out at the end of the war, anyhow, was not Morrison right to release him now?" "Why," came the reply from the barber, "he could be treated in prison hospital like other people, couldn't he?" I asked another group about the issue of civil liberty and 18B. "Oh, we don't like it, of course, but we are not going to be like the German Democrats who let Hitler out on the democratic principles so that he might destroy them liberties and all!" Politically a sound instinct, I think. Obviously, Morrison was out of touch with working-class feeling. But some reactionaries will be delighted to see popular feeling expend itself on a man whom the Conservatives detest, while they get on with some more subtle stunt for dishing the workers. The upshot depends on what is done with this strong sentiment when the immediate row about Mosley's release has died down.

* * *

So it is just fifty years since Robert Blatchford's *Merrie England* was first published. I was glad to see that *Reynolds'* carried a commemorative article last Sunday. After all, that book probably did more than any other to win the generation of Tom Mann and John Burns and Keir Hardie to Socialism. The pioneers—Clarion Scouts, members of the Social-Democratic Federation and the Labour churches—carried *Merrie England* in to the streets. Within a few months a million copies had been sold, and it was translated into half a dozen European languages. The Socialism derived from Blatchford was a typically British blend of doctrine and emotion that drew more from the Bible and from the Nonconformist tradition. It owed little to Marxism. It did for the revived working-class movement of the nineties what *Fabian Essays* (published 1889) did for the intelligentsia. Yet how many members of the Labour Party to-day have read *Merrie England?* How many have even heard of Blatchford? I think we forget our pioneers too easily. Robert Blatchford is alive to-day, and at ninety-three his slogan for the Labour Party is still, "Make Socialists!" And he is right. The best doctrine in the world is ineffective without that crusading spirit, which in the last decade of the nineteenth century turned Socialism from the nostrum of isolated sects into a mass political movement.

* * *

What is the nearest thing we have to-day to Blatchford's *Merrie England?* Oddly enough, I should have to answer Dick Acland's Common Wealth propaganda. It is important to read his new book, *How It Can Be Done* (Macdonald, 2s.). In his introduction Priestley rightly urges the young Service man who talks about a better England to read Acland and not to

> start whittling him down or shrugging him away, otherwise I shall believe that you have not meant what you said but have really been mumbling about the bacon ration and the black-out. And then, before you know where you are, you'll find yourself back in a jerry-built bungalow with a mortgage on it, the job fading out, the hard faces high above in control, and little left but the cheap dope of the newspapers and the time-expired jokes of the B.B.C. If you really want some changes, there are signposts to them here. If they aren't good enough for you, then sit down and work out some better ones, and make Acland accept your improvements and go round the country explaining them for you. (He will, if you convince him.) Don't go off and say there might be something in it, and then forget about it.

That's right. Acland's Christian Communism—that, I think, is the correct description—is a challenge. But the political challenge of Common Wealth is not so simple as Acland thinks. Thousands who might agree with most of his arguments about Socialism yet refuse to take Common Wealth seriously because it is divorced from the main stream of working-class movements. There is an instinctive suspicion of a new organisation started and financed by a few people with money. I don't accept either the most optimistic views of Common Wealth, nor do I agree with those who laugh at it. It has, I think, an important function. It can convince many middle-class people, especially in the technical and managerial class, who would never join the same party with the horny-handed sons of toil, that there is no intelligible way of organising our world except through Socialism.

* * *

In the last few days I have heard many views expressed about the future treatment of Germany. One of the sanest comments came from an eminent Conservative with an excellent record as an anti-Nazi and supporter of collective security before the war. He said something like this: "In all that you do to Germany you must remember the recoil. Germany must be disarmed. For the time being it will be done effectively in any case. It was done last time: the idea now put about that Britain and France disarmed while Germany wickedly and secretly rearmed is the merest propagandist nonsense. The crux is to keep Germany disarmed. If your treatment of Germany is such that the next generation of Germans grow up in conditions to create an acute sense of grievance and injustice, the next generation within the Allied countries will sympathise, as they did last time, with the efforts of young Germans to rebuild their country and restore its self-respect. In that case you won't have the will or conscience within the Allied countries to keep Germany disarmed and you will repeat the tragedy." And the capitalists who now speak loudest about destroying Germany will be the means of rearming her.

* * *

I had several particular reasons for wanting to see *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. I remember well meeting Hemingway in Madrid in 1937. He had just come back from the trenches where he was taking photographs. He was talking about the problem of the individual in war and his own hatred of it. Then I found the book of absorbing interest. I had reservations, but apart from the love story, it seemed to me to be a true product of the Spanish war and to be based on a real understanding of the Spanish people. When I was in Hollywood last year I saw a bit of the film being made. They were rehearsing the scene in which the Fascists come out of the church and are killed by the mob. That morning they had shot the scene in which the bridge is blown up, and I spent a long time studying how they had managed to combine pictorial scenery, toy and real trees and to put the miniature bridge into the right perspective of a stage valley leading up to painted mountains beyond. I found the film itself so disappointing that I did not even stay to the end. The love affair would be sickly in any film; continually cutting across the grim events that are the real theme of this film, I found it quite intolerable. On the question that was raised last week about whether the film is pro- or anti-Fascist propaganda, I don't think there is much to be said. It is true that while the Fascist outrage on Maria is only described, we actually see pictures of the popular killing of Spanish Fascists. The balance could have been more fair. But it is one of the essential and one of the most truthful aspects of the story that the Republicans and guerillas are ordinary, decent, but very primitive, people who have a bad taste in their mouth because in the heat of the first rising they did some brutal killings, and the psychology of Pablo (who like Pilar is quite brilliantly acted), is conditioned by these memories. The Fascists, on the other hand, believe in killing and regard it as a normal basis of their oppressive rule.

* * *

What on earth induced one hundred and twenty-five electric-light-and-power companies in the U.S.A. to sponsor a coast-to-coast broadcast by ex-King Carol from Mexico City? He is certainly not *persona grata* with the State Department at the moment and the U.S. censorship cancelled the broadcast. I suppose this must be regarded as a defeat for Mr. Russell Birdwell, who is paid 35,000 dollars a year by Carol as his publicity agent in the United States. Is one to deduce that Carol has hopes of a deal with the oil interests, whereby he gets his throne back and they get Rumanian oil?

* * *

A friend who gets about the country a good bit gives it as his opinion that the one foreign people who are genuinely popular in England are the Italians. They work well in ones and twos on farms, get on happily with the farmers and their families. One can think of phrases that came into the English language last war through common life with the French. My friend gives me an example of a macaronic word, which in the mouth of an English sergeant may mean that it has come to stay. A caller at an Italian camp asked for Giuseppe. "He is not here just for the moment, sir," said the sergeant. "He is out signoriting."

CRITIC

A SENSE OF THE PAST

["Honourable Members, it would appear, prefer, of deliberate choice, to go back to their Victorian building, with its cramped accommodation and a hundred inconveniences . . . dominated by the spirit of Gladstone and Disraeli."—*Spectator*, Nov. 5th.]

The House! what memories cluster
Around that vanished fane!
Though elsewhere Members muster
What tender ties remain!
That homely yet heroic style
Befits the Commons' shrine
And passion for their Gothic pile
Transcends the Party line.

Unanimous nostalgia
The bombed-out Members share;
All suffered from neuralgia
In that fog-filtered air!
What troubles of the throat and nose
They all enjoyed of old!
And every Session ere they rose
They caught the Commons' cold.

Perpetually muffled
In currents dry and warm,
How comradely they snuffled
Through Budgets and Reform!
What though the ventilation was
A menace to hygiene
And generated poison gas
Behind the purdah screen.

That atmosphere baronial,
That traceried decor,
That antique ceremonial
All, all they will restore—
That sense of crowd, that lack of room,
That decorous hubbub,
That storied Chamber steeped in gloom,
Half chapel and half club!

Bleak winds of reconstruction
May elsewhere freely range,
That cosy reproduction,
And who would wish to change?
Away with harsh modernity,
Hard, chaste, severe and cold!
The renovated House will be
Exactly like the old.

SAGITTARIUS.

THIS ENGLAND

A 5/- prize for the first entry in this column goes to Jay Milne.

Paste entries on postcard or slip of paper and give details of origin. Address to THIS ENGLAND, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

Last night a Glasgow woman bought a pie, and on eating a portion of it later felt something stick in her throat. She then pulled an elastic garter from her mouth.

On taking the pie back to the shop her money (6*d*.) was refunded.—From *Glasgow Evening Times*.

The Bishop of Chelmsford, Dr. H. A. Wilson, said in London last night: "We have in Britain the loveliest, neatest, and the prettiest girls that God ever made."—*Daily paper*.

The Dean of Ely said at Ely yesterday: "The use of the birch is not to be deplored. All the best men in the country have been beaten, archbishops, bishops, and even deans. Without sensible correction they would not be the men they are to-day."—*Manchester Guardian*.

One theory is that the woman was nude because she belonged to one of the Services.—*News of the World*.

Why should a child be tortured with the imagery of Shakespeare and the rotting facts of text-book geography, and know nothing of the beauty of the workings of his own stomach?—Letter in *News Chronicle*.

AMERICAN CABINET AND CONGRESS

MR. HULL'S appearance before both Houses of Congress to answer questions about the Moscow Conference is an innovation which, if it became a precedent, might easily have immense consequences. It is an old theme of discussion in the United States. Alexander Hamilton desired to present his reports in person; and it was probably only Jefferson's fears of his direct influence which persuaded Madison to secure the decision that "present" meant present in writing and not in person. In 1864 Pendleton of Ohio introduced a resolution into the House to enable members of the Cabinet to attend the sessions of Congress and speak in the debates. Fifteen years later, as a senator, he repeated, though in vain, his proposal. In 1866 Congressman Long made another attempt in the same direction. Mr. Taft, both during and after his Presidency, was strongly in favour of the scheme. In 1921, during the discussions over the Budget, a similar proposal was made. But no one, so far, has been able to conquer the combination of antagonism and inertia by which the scheme has always been met.

It would, indeed, profoundly alter the balance of American federal institutions if it were adopted. A Cabinet member who began to exercise great influence in Congess would, almost inevitably, become a kind of Prime Minister; his influence with the President would make him not very remote from a rival to the latter's power. Anyone who notes how far-reaching is the prestige which his past membership of Congress gives to Mr. Hull in the White House can easily realise how much more important he would become if his right to take part in debates was inherent in his office. Granted the nature of the American system, it seems clear that if this procedure became usual, instead of a rare innovation, it would be difficult to prevent the Presidential primacy becoming subordinate to the power of the member or members of the Cabinet who were able to dominate Congressional proceedings. That, in its turn, would lead either to an effort by the President to choose Cabinet colleagues whose rivalry he need not fear, or to the relatively rapid relegation of the President to a position more akin to that of the President of the French Republic than to that of Mr. Roosevelt or Woodrow Wilson.

The advantages of the change are, no doubt, very great. It is always interesting to make the executive directly responsible to the legislature. Question-time is pretty nearly the most valuable feature of the House of Commons; it is a fair guess that more reputations are made and lost by Ministers between 2.45 and 3 o'clock than at any other time of the day. But the inherent logic of question-time is that Ministers are responsible to the House. Mr. Morrison may find that the defence he makes of his decision to release Sir Oswald Mosley may lead to a vote of censure; and, of course, a successful vote of censure means a general election. This technique does not easily fit into the character of American government with its nationally elected President, its fixed terms for executive and legislature, and its possible difference of political complexion between the White House, the Senate and the House of Representatives. One suspects, therefore, that the innovation Mr. Hull has just inaugurated is a special war-time expedient rather than a change which can be grafted into the whole ethos of the American idea. Were it to be so grafted, it is at least probable that changes in the Constitution would be required which, in their total result, would go much farther than most Presidents would be willing to see them go. Mr. Roosevelt's experience with the Supreme Court shows plainly that the power formally to experiment with the historic Constitution moves within very narrow limits. It is convention rather than amendment that is the primary source of American constitutional change, and it may be doubted whether even Mr. Hull's authority is sufficient to start a convention whose implications are as great as his recent submission to cross-examination. It bears the stamp of war's abnormality upon its face; and it is likely to become no more than an interesting footnote in the history books of this fantastic era.

WHAT IS DENMARK?

[The author of this article is Hon. Secretary to the Danish Council.]

FOR three months now Denmark has been in a unique position amongst all the countries of the world. On August 29th the Germans declared martial law throughout the country, and at the same time the legal, constitutional Scavenius Government resigned. Some weeks ago the state of emergency was officially lifted (though in fact most of its provisions still exist), but there is as yet no new Danish Government. The Germans have searched in vain for a sufficient number of prominent stooges to form a Government, but there are not enough Danish quislings even for that limited purpose. And even if there were, a *legal* Government could not be established. Such a Government would need the consent of Parliament, for otherwise it would not be accepted by the King, and the King is the only one who can nominate a legal Danish Government. King Christian has firmly declared that he will not do anything without the consent of Parliament, and the Danish Rigsdag has ceased to function. According to constitutional practice it should have met on the first Tuesday of October. But the members decided not to meet, i.e., those members who had not been imprisoned by the Germans.

There can be little doubt that one of their main reasons for refusing to exercise their parliamentary duties was that on October 1st the Nazis had begun a mass round-up of a certain section of the Danish community—the Jews. This senseless persecution of thousands of Danish fellow-countrymen (for that is how we look upon the Jews in Denmark) was the last straw. From now on no decent Dane can have, or will have, any dealings with the Germans except on the conditions obtaining between enemy countries.

But there again the situation is most peculiar. When Germany invaded Denmark on April 9th, 1940, it was, of course, without any previous declaration of war, and the Danish Government accepted the German occupation as a military necessity, though under protest. In return the Germans gave a unilateral promise not to interfere in the internal affairs of the country and to leave the small Danish Navy and Army intact. Thus began what may be called the "legal" period of occupation which was to last for 40 long and dreary months—with a slowly but steadily growing movement of active resistance—until the Danish people finally saw a chance of striking a blow of real military significance against the Germans. This was when Sweden stopped the transit traffic to and from Norway, thus making the Germans dependent upon the Danish lines of communication for the maintenance of their Norwegian garrisons. An unprecedented wave of sabotage and strikes swept Denmark, and with the declaration of martial law on August 29th we entered the "illegal" period of the occupation.

But this period is not only characterised by the "illegal" aspect of the Danish people's fight against the invader, but also by the total lack of any legal status *vis-à-vis* the United Nations.

When the Germans declared martial law they referred to the terms of Part III of the Hague Convention. This is the part dealing with the powers—and the obligations—of the occupying forces in hostile territory, in other words in a country with which the invaders are at war. At the same time the Germans are anxious to state that they are *not* at war with Denmark, obviously because they still cherish the vain hope of being relieved of the burden of governing the country themselves. On the other hand, the Danes certainly are at war with Germany, to all practical intents and purposes. A *formal* declaration of war can, however, only be made by King *and* Parliament in unison, and therefore it simply cannot be made in the present circumstances.

So what is Denmark? And who leads this peculiar country, without a Government, without a parliament, and with a King who is constitutionally powerless without a parliament?

It is now known that after the declaration of martial law a Danish Council of Liberty was formed, consisting of representatives of all the Danish movements "whose desire it is, in agreement with the wishes of the people, to work in unity actively against the German occupation forces until Denmark is again a free and independent country." (I am quoting from the first proclamation issued by Denmark's Council of Liberty through the clandestine press.)

The proclamation goes on to say that members of the Council pledge themselves to put their work for Denmark's cause before any party or sectional interest; that their aim shall be to organise the resistance against the Germans in every sphere, and by all means at the disposal of the people; that they will work for the democratic ideals and fight not only the external enemy but also the Danish Nazis, renegades and capitulators. It is also stated that the Council has co-opted a representative of the Free Danes abroad, "whose valuable work for Denmark's cause it warmly appreciates."

The Association of Free Danes in Great Britain and Northern Ireland elect once a year by secret poll, their governing body, the Danish Council in London. To-day, this is the only democratically elected body of Danes who can meet in freedom to discuss matters of vital importance to the Danish nation. Yet the Free Danes do not claim to represent the Danish people except in spirit. Consequently they have no desire to form a Government in exile. But in view of the extraordinary situation of the country from the point of view of international law, and of the very direct and effective contribution of the Danish people to the military effort of the Allies, the Danish Council feels that it has a moral claim to obtain all possible

facilities to participate in all inter-allied work on behalf of a free Denmark.

An open letter to Mr. Churchill, published in a recent issue of the underground paper *De Frie Danske* ("The Free Danes") says: "We want to call your attention to the fact that public opinion in your country still seems inclined to regard the Danes as non-Allies. This is not only a great mistake, but also a severe injustice. We fully realise that such an injustice could never be committed *deliberately* by a people from whom the word and the notion of 'fairness' has spread over the earth." The letter, which was written in the last month of the "legal" period, goes on to explain that it must be due to ignorance of the true state of affairs in Denmark, and then follows a survey of the numerous acts of active resistance by the Danish people. "Not one day passes by, not one night elapses without some sort of activity which destroys some part of the German war machine. When between 11 and 12 o'clock in the evening the inhabitants of Copenhagen hear the bang of some explosion they know they can sleep quietly. The Germans have got their daily dose!" And the letter ends with these words:—

> "We *are* Allies!
> We behave like Allies.
> So why not call us Allies?"

Why not, indeed? Well, words do not matter nearly as much as deeds, so I would rather put it this way: Why not *treat* us as Allies? It is not a question of formalities, but of facilities for participating to the full in the active war effort and the post-war discussions of the United Nations, on the understanding that no formal or legalistic obstacles shall be put in the way of the fighting Danish nation's right to self-determination, freedom and independence, and to its eager desire to contribute a full share to the reconstruction and rehabilitation of a freed Europe. It may not be possible to introduce the Danish people formally to the distinguished company of the United Nations, but that does not matter—a good hearty handshake will be quite enough just to make us feel that our friends and comrades in the United Nations have accepted the outstretched hand of the fighting Danes.

LEIF GUNDEL

ON NOT HAVING KNOWN T. R. GLOVER

He died only in the summer of this year; and I must have passed him a hundred times on King's Parade. Indeed, I knew who he was, with his vast frame, his dark complexion, and the large gold spectacles. I even saw him once in the basement at Heffers', where the classics are kept—is it significant that the classics are in the basement—and I remember that he was buying a new book which the great American scholar, E. K. Rand, had just published. I knew he was a Latinist of some distinction, the Public Orator at Cambridge and one of the few Nonconformist dons who did not hide their dissent under a bushel. Looking back over some twenty years, I can remember how W. H. R. Rivers, with whom I was staying at Cambridge, lamented his absence from hall—"you ought to know him," he said, "a fine combination of Dr. Johnson and Charles Lamb."

Well, I shall never know him in the flesh, and yet I feel that he has become a great friend of mine. It is not only that he emits exclamations of excitement over things I love, the neighbourhood of Queen's University, California, the generous vitality of American youth. It is not only that he knew how to comb a bookshop as few people know that art, and that he understood that a good bookseller is, next to a great writer, the noblest work of God. It is not only that, even as he passed into late middle age, he always had an overflowing enthusiasm for the things he loved, and, above all, an obvious love for young people.

All of these are qualities by which he is endeared to me. I do not mind the presence in him of obvious gusts of ill-temper. I find no resentment at the fact that he seems rarely to have been capable of understanding views he did not share. I give him freely the right to half a hundred opinions which were crude, or ill-digested, or held without an atom of evidence to justify the belief. I even agree that any careful reader of his books will find in them, first, a pretty obvious set of prejudices that he had never stayed to examine, and a mass of ideas which are, however scholarly their expression, ideas seen through other men's eyes.

All this, as I turn over the pages of the neat score of volumes he wrote, seems to me completely devoid of importance. What makes him a friendly writer is, first, that he has so great a gusto for living, and, second, that, like Charles Lamb, he is always inviting you freely into the inner chambers of his mind. I have no title to pronounce whether he was a great classic in the sense that Bywater was, or C. M. Bowra is. I know that he has none of the originality which makes you confident, if you take up a book by M. P. Charlesworth or F. Cumont, you will be bound to find something new or something exciting. Most of his work, I suspect, was superb popularisation, and full of strong, often dubious, prejudices at that. I do not think he could ever have felt the hot passion of Catullus, in one age, or read Marcus Aurelius without a sense of amazement at his aloof agnosticism in another. I admit freely that he trod, for the most part, a pretty conventional road, and, all his life long, said pretty conventional things—about Horace and Herodotus, about Cæsar and St. Paul. He did not leave the main highway for any of the exciting and difficult by-paths which lead to the discovery of the unknown.

But how superbly he trod the main highway where he lived, head up in the air, gown, I am sure, floating freely on the breeze, that great fist of his shaking his emphasis about a line in Horace or a reference in Thucydides which, if everyone emphasises it, he had always seen freshly for himself, as if its inner meaning was seen for the first time. A real distinction in the power of phrase, a sterling and sturdy common sense, these marked almost every page that he wrote. He could describe an ancient city of the Græco-Roman world as though, when he had sent his last pupil home, he was accustomed to go for a stroll down its streets. He could write of the dreams of Alexander, the habits of Cæsar, the journeys of St. Paul, as though they were all contemporaries of his who put their confidence in him. And the history he wrote was not merely a splendid, sometimes even a gorgeous tapestry, woven on a conventional pattern. In that pattern you always discern the figure of T. R. Glover, tremendously alive, asking this man questions, telling another how things have changed since his day, eager and vigorous, perhaps a little too self-confident, but adorably insatiable in his enthusiasm and his curiosity.

Glover had the great gift of making the past come alive. He had it, I think, because his stout common sense was set in the perspective of an imagination that never stopped working. He wanted not only to know why people did things, but why they did things in a particular way. He always asked himself what he would have done in the same situation. So that, whoever it was, Herodotus or Alexander, whether it was Horace or Augustus, he seemed to write about them from inside themselves and not aloofly; he makes them contemporaries whom one might easily have gone to see drive down Constitution Hill or who might publish a new work which made the critics pleased or angry.

I do not know anything about his political views of current questions; I suspect from his writings that he was an intelligent Conservative, who thought that the average man is spiritually important, but, historically, much about what he was when he supported Anytus in the condemnation of Socrates or crowded the seats in the arena to cheer indifferently whether it was Pompey or Caesar, Nero or Hadrian, who provided the spectacle. I would not say he took a low view of human nature; but I doubt whether he expected very much from it. But I think he had a power of hero-worship which made him feel the greatness of the really great man overwhelmingly. One catches that note in his sentences, for example, whenever figures of the stature of St. Paul come upon the scene. At such moments, his writing takes on a kind of extra quality: there is, pretty obviously, an emphasis of excitement which puts a new emotion into the learning he conjures up for his reader. One almost feels that he takes the misunderstanding of a great man by his age as a personal insult. He can never have forgiven Brutus and his fellow-conspirators. Who were they to challenge a mighty dream? Mr. Glover knew his place in the twentieth century, they ought to have known their place, too, in the first century before Christ. The average man is, for him, pretty average. He has all kinds of good things at his disposal, Horace sings for him, there is Virgil's epic, there are flowers and, if he is lucky, a glass of Falernian wine. The part of wisdom is for him to know his betters when they step upon the stage of history; politics and the deeper issues are for the elect who are beyond his ken. And, for Glover, I think, if the average man went quietly about his business, the affairs of this world would have arranged themselves for him pretty adequately; as adequately, at least, as our human nature, being what it is, entitled us to expect.

The affairs of this world: the very phrase reminds me of another Glover whom I must not forget. There is the classical scholar, the superb populariser, the ardent traveller to whom new places and new faces are the elixir of new life. But there is also Glover the mystic, a God-intoxicated man, who wrote, indeed, books to communicate his joy in the faith he held to others, but in whose religious volumes one always feels that the book behind the book is, somehow, ten times more important and impressive than the book he managed to write. This Glover is a man with a message to deliver which obviously transcends in its significance all the historical learning, the classical lore, the technical insight into scholarship, that he possessed; I think he did not deliver his message because he felt too deeply about it. He left only the impression of one who has caught a glimpse of some vision splendid, and falters when he seeks to fulfil the task of conveying to others any sense beyond the passionate declaration that in this vision only is the truth to be found. This mystic Glover walked alone on heights where he found an entrance to a succinct experience. But like all men who make that ascent he can do no more than assert the experience, leaving its truth unproven to those to whom he sought to offer understanding and faith.

I never knew T. R. Glover, and I have no idea of the thousand and one intimate habits which go to the making of a personality. What this big, burly tutor was like as a teacher; whether he held a lecture room as entranced by speech as he holds our reader by his pages; what happened to transform the gawky sixth-form boy at Bristol Grammar School into a man who lived every line of the classics he knew so well; why those years at Queen's University set the New World for him in the background of a perpetual sunlight; who his intimates were at Cambridge; what, for instance, would have happened when he encountered agnosticism serene and pacifism urgent, as in Lowes Dickinson, or atheism militant and militarism passionate, as in McTaggart, to questions like these I have no answer. I never knew T. R. Glover although I often saw him. I suspect even that he would have rejected angrily most of my ideas. But I do not feel that he belongs to Cambridge only. I feel that he is one of those scores of men who have lit a bright lamp on that road to the childhood of the world which makes it easier for men of my generation to guess, by a backward look, the direction in which we are travelling. He lit a bright lamp; and the humble craftsman in one art can well stay a moment to salute with admiration one of his fellows whose work was often exquisite and always worthy of praise. HAROLD J. LASKI

AN IDEAL HUSBAND

It is really astonishing how well Wilde's plays wear! The revival of *An Ideal Husband* at The Westminster Theatre, in spite of shortcomings here and there, offers an evening of exhilarating entertainment. The wit is superb, the diction delightful and the whole is as light as a feather—despite those passages of sentiment, which are at any rate as dramatically appropriate as corresponding loftier passages in, say, *Love for Love*. Thirty years ago some might have foreseen that Oscar Wilde would live in English literature as a wit, as a figure and as the author of fine prose passages and *The Ballad of Reading Gaol*—possibly, too, be recalled as the author of *The Importance of Being Earnest*, a unique stage-trifle; but that any of his other plays when revived half a century after they were written would continue to exhilarate, did not enter the heads of contemporary critics. Those plays seemed too artificial and modish, and to suffer also from that particular drawback which Lady Markby in Act II defines so neatly: "You are remarkably modern, Mabel. A little too modern perhaps. Nothing is so dangerous as being too modern. One is apt to grow old-fashioned quite suddenly." And that is what happened to Oscar—for a time. But what is the secret of his resilience? Bernard Shaw put a finger on it in the second article he wrote for the *Saturday Review*, January 12th, 1895. He was reviewing both the first performance of *The Ideal Husband* at the Haymarket and Henry James's *Guy Domville* which had just been hissed off the stage of St. James's Theatre two days later, a failure which extinguished the novelist as a playwright for ever.

Shaw began, in that article, by chaffing his fellow critics: "They laugh angrily at Mr. Wilde's epigrams like a child who is coaxed with being amused in the very act of setting up a yell of rage and agony . . . They protest that the trick is obvious and that such epigrams can be turned out by the score by anyone lightminded enough to condescend to such frivolity. As far as I can ascertain, I am the only person in London who cannot sit down and write an Oscar Wilde play at will. The fact that his plays, though apparently lucrative, remain unique under these circumstances, says much for the self-denial of our scribes." Then comes the significant comment: "In a certain sense Mr. Wilde is to me our only thorough playwright. He plays with everything: with wit, with philosophy, with drama, with actors and audience, with the whole theatre. . . . His plays," he continues, "are unapproachably playful" . . . "The English critic, always protesting that the drama should not be didactic, and yet always complaining if the dramatist does not find sermons in stones and good in everything, will be conscious of *a subtle and pervading levity* (italics mine) in *An Ideal Husband*." Now in 1895, Bernard Shaw had not yet found his religion, or developed his conception of the "artist" as a being more or less (perhaps unconsciously) in the confidence of the Life Force. He still regarded himself as a reformer, as certainly more important than an "artist," and certainly different. The artist was a bone-lazy playboy whose one redeeming characteristic was a flat refusal to do a stroke of work that did not delight himself or others like him. By stressing the "pervading levity" and detachment of the artist, Oscar Wilde, he hit upon the reason why his work, after the inevitable interval of "dating," should then recontinue to delight.

In that performance at the Haymarket Charles Hawtrey (he must have been admirable) took the part of Lord Goring, and Charles Brookfield, a fine actor in little things, played the imperturbable butler Phipps, who is the ancestor of so many confidential valets—Jeeves among them. The fun of making the servant a stricter embodiment of tradition than the master is as old as *The Rivals*, but it was Wilde who first exploited it to the full. Very well, to-day at The Westminster, Mr. Townsend Whitling acts that "mask with a manner," who represents in the play the dominance of form. A late Victorian aristocracy had become itself too indolent and promiscuous, though it was still self-confident, to maintain the distinction of impassivity. It had taken even to laughing a little at itself and abusing itself.

There are two considerable difficulties to be overcome in reviving a Wilde play. The first is due to the comparative rarity of those social types on which the actors and actresses have to model their deportment on his stage; the second to their dramatic training being now almost entirely in the direction of realistic acting. Examples of the manner which combines ceremony with ease are no longer to be frequently met with. Fine manners as distinguished from merely decent ones, those manners which Oscar with his enormous love of form relished so much and delighted to exaggerate, are an art which the socially obscure have no means of bringing to perfection, nor, for that matter, the smart. The difficulty, therefore, in casting a Wilde play is to get together a group of players who, in addition to speaking the lines excellently and bringing out all the absurdities, can also give the impression of being well-bred in the *old*-fashioned sense. At the Westminster I thought I perceived this quality only in the most elderly actress, Dame Irene Vanbrugh, who put delightful verve into deliciously extravagant Lady Markby. In unworldly, stupidly good Lady Chiltern it is not so essential; though even in Miss Rosemary Scott's part there are moments where the art of being courteously rude is of value. But the difficulty of that part, likewise that of her husband, Sir Robert, lies in the second direction. In moments of emotion they have both to be "stagey." These are opportunities for histrionic display which an older generation of actors and actresses longed for and rose to, but for those trained in the sincerer and more realistic modern school, they present great difficulties. A high-falutin speech or scene must at all costs be redeemed from flatness—at the cost even of nature and common sense, and to such those trained in a more literal interpretation of feeling find it hard to lend themselves. I noticed Sir Robert at such moments was apt to turn his back to the audience to hide his want of emotion.

Miss Peggy Bryan was most ingratiating as Mabel, to whom Lady Markby addressed that warning about being too up to date. But in her acting I missed a certain conscious elegance. Mabel would not have been through—say, her mother's—minutely vigorous training in deportment, but she would certainly have been taught how to hold herself sitting and standing. The fun and prettiness of the part depend upon Mabel's pretending to be natural and unconventional, not in her being so. She is, of course, the counterpart and fitting bride-to-be of Lord Goring. Lord Goring is the young man Oscar Wilde would have liked to have been had he not been himself. You remember the description of Lord Goring, brief and to the point like all the indications in Wilde's plays: "Thirty-four, but always says he is younger. A well-bred expressionless face. He is clever, but would not like to be thought so. A flawless dandy, he would be annoyed if he were considered romantic. He plays with life, and is on perfectly good terms with the world. He is fond of being misunderstood. It gives him a post of vantage." Mr. Roland Oliver was a very pleasantly imperturbable Goring, but except in dress he did not suggest the exquisite or the dandy. I admit this was asking much, and in hinting at the possession of a romantic heart he was much more successful. His father the noble lord in the blue ribbon (no damned nonsense, no damned merit about the garter, as Melbourne said) was most amusingly played by Mr. Esmé Percy, who is a great dab at old men, but his interpretation of Lord Caversham lacked a certain realistic quality. It did not suggest a Lawrence portrait of, say, a minor statesman in Greville's Memoirs.

I have been prompted to pick holes because the play and performance gave me so much pleasure that it whetted my appetite for still more. Ungrateful? Yes, but a compliment. Go and see. Considered as drama there are some delightfully contrived incidents in the play—the effect of Lady Chiltern's note to Lord Goring in bringing husband and wife together for instance. The scenery and dresses were excellent, but the preliminary tableau is stupid and a mistake.

DESMOND MACCARTHY.

CHRISTMAS. Give a postal subscription to this paper to a member of the Forces or a friend overseas. *Rates on this page.*

THE MOVIES

"The Demi-Paradise," at the Odeon.

Patrons of the English cinema will know which section of our life is usually misrepresented as England, the England of Harrods rather than the Co-ops., of quiet weddings and quiet week-ends and cosy family life in the Georgian house on £5,000 a year. In *The Demi-Paradise* we are there again, though our incomes have gone up. Millionaires now, but still English gentlefolk, still displaying our virtues of tolerance, sang-froid, a sense of duty and the ability to laugh at our own faults (without any intention of rectifying them). Into this milieu comes an enchanting Stakhanovite (Laurence Olivier) with a patent propellor for the millionaire to build and test in his shipyard. A first visit, in 1939, leaves the Russian puzzled, bewildered and despairing of an old-fashioned people, content apparently to live on its past. A second visit in 1940 shows the difference, the same spirit but beneath tin hats, behind canteen bars, with dog-fights overhead—the gentleman is doing his stuff in his tolerant, humorous, gentlemanly way, the lady has evacuees and joins the Wrens. Then Germany attacks Russia and Barchester takes Ivan to his heart and they agree to beat Germany together and laugh together when it's over.

The film is made by a dazzling performance from Laurence Olivier and the skilful direction of Anthony Asquith. The section describing the 1939 visit is the best part, the nearest thing yet to English René Clair, the Russian providing an ironic commentary on Anthony Asquith's previous presentations of this stratum of our life. The change-over to the war spirit is beset with clichés and, if the director does not manage to completely avoid them, his wit hardly flags, while Laurence Olivier's completely consistent realisation of his Russian holds things together. Indeed, he makes the other principal parts, even when played as well as Miss Penelope Ward plays hers—seem conventional inventions by comparison, as stagey as too many of the unreal sets. The long cast of character actors who appear and reappear in these films do their bits admirably and without intrusion, which is what one wants of them (witness Miles Malleson at the theatre Box Office). The director leaves out what Laski has analysed as The Danger of Being a Gentleman—of course, for, as Ivan would have told him, we live in a capitalist country and the directors are dependent on millionaires. But the film is amusing enough to beguile all but the very pious.

PLAYS AND PICTURES

"Ten Little Niggers," at the St. James's

The Christie masterpieces can be classified into those stories which just might happen and those which are frankly fantastic. *Ten Little Niggers* belongs to the latter and less happy class. If it is not one of her best books, still less does it make a good play. Murder when it occurs eight times is even more monotonous in three acts than in 300 pages. Nor is the spectator excited to back his fancy in picking the murderer. A logician might plump for the police inspector (well played by Mr. Percy Walsh), because no such official would behave to the richer classes with this offensive familiarity. The experienced theatre-goer, on the other hand, is likely to pick Emily Brent, merely because she is played by Miss Henrietta Watson, who manages every inflection and gesture with such mastery that she plays her colleagues right off the stage. The rest of the cast fill in adequately the rather conventional characters provided for them. The programme declares that the play is "adapted from her Famous Best Seller by Agatha Christie," which strikes us as a surprising vulgarity to be permitted by so distinguished a writer. While not a very good entertainment, the show is better than most.

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Correspondence

THE MANAGERIAL REVOLUTION

SIR,—In "The Managerial Revolution," Mr. Burnham propounded a political theory to the effect that neither capital nor labour, but the managers, would eventually become the ruling class. The matter is more complex than your two writers admit. Here are just a few of the difficult contradictory facts that must be faced before any useful criticisms of Mr. Burnham's theories can begin :—

(*a*) The managerial class is neither class-conscious nor politically conscious. Nor is it organised for either political or direct action.

(*b*) Many of the most influential of the management class stand entirely outside of any individual industrial organisation, serving a number of these in professional capacity, e.g. accountants, advertising agents, architects. Every section has its own Institute : all are increasingly conscious of their professional status. The majority are Right-minded.

(*c*) Of the managers within the large industrial unit, the majority are both socially and politically informed to a high degree. In particular they are sensitive to housing conditions and to the worker's amenities—or the lack of them.

All are interested in securing output. To do this, they know that they must have a "happy ship." This makes for a democratic and, therefore, anti-Fascist outlook. Further, there is at the moment the growing influence of such associations as A.S.S.E.T., and the associations covering scientific workers and draughtsmen respectively.

(*d*) Specialists like the personnel manager, medical officer, welfare superintendent, canteen manager, even the production manager are concerned with the human relations within the factory. Inevitably they become Left-minded.

(*e*) In this country output is influenced by the will of the individual worker as a member of his (or her) social group (5–6), and by the attitude of the shop-stewards to a much greater extent than in the United States (of which Mr. Burnham writes). Together these attitudes will defeat the most ingenious of rate-setters.

(*f*) Save at a crisis, the shareholders have no influence whatever on the fortunes of the average large concern to-day. In a crisis the shareholders may dictate policy (often disastrously). The influence of the City is general in the older industries, *not* in the new.

(*g*) In fact, State controlled units like the B.B.C. and the L.P.T.B. have so far turned out to be less humane and less sympathetic employers than, say, I.C.I. or Unilever. Hence the latters' greater popularity with workers of all classes.

(*h*) Management of large units has become so complicated that no managing director can master a fraction of the elaborate techniques involved. Decisions are largely made by small committees.

One of the grievances of the abler managers is the hopelessness of explaining technical intricacies to financial or one-line chiefs ignorant of the very alphabet of the techniques employed. *Faute de mieux*, the experts must control the situation.

And so what? Just this. A gradual managerial revolution *is* in progress; it has *no* political colour, but is compelled by the logic of facts; any final bureaucratic trend elsewhere will surely be countered here by the increasing powers enjoyed by the workers, through their unions, shop stewards and their part in J.P.C.s. And it may take 40-50 years to complete.

CECIL CHISHOLM

SIR,—Surely Mr. Davenport accepts much of Mr. Burnham's theory of managerial revolution far too readily? First, Mr. Burnham's insistence that Socialism is not the coming alternative to capitalism depends almost wholly upon his own definition that "the determining characteristics of Socialist society are that it is classless, fully democratic and international." Hence, of course, he has no difficulty in holding that the Russian economy is not Socialistic.

Secondly, in order to assert that the managers are in process of exercising sovereignty he has to argue (in 1941) that "the localisation of sovereignty in Parliament is ended save for a lingering remnant in England (where it may not last the next few months)."

Thirdly, Mr. Burnham's claim that the Russian and German revolutions are examples of the assumption of supreme power by the managers is palpably untrue.

In both countries the function of industrial managers is to execute without question the decisions of the political heads of the State. They exercise no significant power.

J. A. FRANKLIN

MOSLEY'S RELEASE

SIR,—As it is your custom to open your columns to unpopular opinions, perhaps you will allow me to comment upon the protests against Mosley's liberation from prison. I waste no pity on Mosley—he would have been very differently treated in a country lacking the liberal principles that he deplores. But it is strange to find a society nominally concerned with the defence of civil liberties so anxious to keep the Habeas Corpus Act in abeyance. It is also to be remembered that not only Fascists but Pacificists and, until the summer of 1941, Communists were opposed to the war effort. I suggest that Communists in particular are ill advised in clamouring for the continued imprisonment of those who have committed no indictable offence. For they may find it a dangerous precedent for keeping men in prison on account of their unpopular or anti-patriotic opinions.

I suggest, moreover, that the Fascist danger here is not from men so foolish as to adopt an Italian name and an Italian uniform, but from those of similar opinions who will arm themselves with some such slogan as "England First," or "National Union"; and who will thus delude a public that would never succumb to Mosley's ingenuous appeals. Such men will welcome the hysterical agitation against Mosley as a red herring or a lightning-conductor.

RAYMOND MORTIMER

SIR,—We regard the release of Sir Oswald Mosley as inopportune, for the following reasons :—

(1) Sir Oswald Mosley is not an individual of minor significance, but has world-wide notoriety as the leader of British Fascism and the friend of Hitler and Mussolini, and the organiser of anti-Semitic propaganda.

(2) The House of Commons could have been consulted, and the reasons actuating the Government given full publicity *before his release, and not afterwards*. Urgent public necessity justified his arrest in 1940, and no evidence has been given that *similar urgent public necessity* called for his release.

(3) The war has reached a critical stage, both in its military and political aspects, and the release of the leader of British Fascism at this moment cannot help, and may seriously affect, the confidence of our Allies abroad as to the United Front against Fascism in Great Britain.

(4) At home, his return has provoked demonstrations and protests in war factories and in workers' organisations which could, to some extent, have been avoided by less precipitate action on the part of H.M. Government.

(5) German propaganda on the wireless and in the press has availed itself of the opportunity to exaggerate the strength of Fascist sympathy in Great Britain.

E. V. TEMPEST (Chairman),
L. B. ROBINSON (Hon. Secretary),
W. BRAYSHAW (Hon. Treasurer),
of the Bradford Anti-Fascist Joint Committee.

ULSTER PARLIAMENT

SIR,—Here in Northern Ireland, not only members of the Labour Party but practically everyone who was not part of the official Tory machine read with pleasure your short comment in the NEW STATESMAN on the Ulster situation; it was quoted widely here.

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JONATHAN CAPE

We welcome any occasional glimpse into real conditions in the Six Counties—jerrymandering and mass personation at elections, religious discrimination (even in the case of ex-Servicemen) and mass unemployment in the fifth year of the war when factories over here could be employing our men and women and taking some of the strain from English workers. Particularly heart-rending is the mortality, heavier than any you have experienced in England, among mothers and infants and tuberculosis patients; we have neither a Ministry of Health nor any adequate machinery for dealing with health problems.

Two apologists for Unionist Ulster who have been critical of your comments are, first, a Tory M.P., and second, a MacDonaldite ex-Labour man. I feel I need say little about the attitude of Prof. D. L. Savory, M.P., except that all commentators agree that he did attack Beattie, the Labour Member, very bitterly in the House, and also that he is unwise to reject Beattie's unemployment figures, as Beattie obtained these from two Conservative M.P.s who were supplied with them as a basis for a private conscription appeal. Mitchell Gordon presents us with a different problem. He and Harry Midgley, M.P., made an attempt to split the Labour movement here, and failed so completely to bring over any Trade Unions or Divisional Labour Parties that Gordon dropped out completely and Midgley took a Cabinet post under Unionist tutelage in usual renegade fashion, and now competes with our Prime Minister, Brooke, in his fulminations against Roman Catholics. Your readers will agree that the presence of such a man in the Cabinet does not make a government truly representative.

With regard to finance, Gordon states that the Six Counties pay heavily for their connection with Great Britain. Our official rulers take a different view. Andrews, the former P.M., continually insists on Ulster's dependence on Great Britain, and declares that the Tories cannot give Beveridge to the Six Counties without English financial help. You can't have it both ways.

JACK MACGOUGAN,
Labour candidate for Cromac.

THE LAND ARMY

SIR,—Ex-Landgirl and I seem to take party against Miss Sackville-West. Is this not the typical case of how green-table decisions work in practice? I am well aware that the W.L.A. should be responsible for our mental as much as physical welfare, but having read the few more examples of how the girls are being looked after and entertained, you may agree with me in wondering whether our district officials can or even should be made responsible for us. What Ex-Landgirl described are really the general conditions throughout the country as far as I have experienced them myself. But I would now like to show Miss Sackville-West how the schemes designed by Headquarters are being executed by our minor and so competent officials.

During our first week at the hostel we were given our one and only lecture within six months, on hygiene, of course, *i.e.*, the symptoms of V.D., and we were even taught at the time that this disease was the real secret weapon of Hitler. So much for our general and political education.

Yes, we had also one M.O.I. film performance coming down. It showed us how land work is being done and what a pleasant occupation it is, and that was during harvest, when we worked very long hours and many girls had already sprained wrists or were generally overworked. So much for recreation by means of light entertainment.

Some six weeks ago, however, we girls handed a letter to our hostel warden, who is welfare officer at the same time, containing addresses and references to C.E.M.A. officers who are organising hostel entertainments, only the warden has not yet had time to attend to it, and she, incidentally, did not know of C.E.M.A.'s existence either. So much for the good will of our officers to help us.

For the sake of the landgirls and the prestige of the W.L.A. I do hope that conditions in other counties are different from ours, but I am stressing our problem so much because we are having a very hard life doing splendid work, and we do want more appreciation for it than has been given to us so far. We are not enough in touch with the outside world, the girls don't often read papers, they either haven't got the time or, more likely still, haven't got the paper, or have no means of demonstrating our grievances sufficiently to have them met eventually. So if this correspondence has made clear to members of the W.L.A. like Miss Sackville-West, who, I am sure, have the best intentions to make us happy in every way, what is really happening within the Land Army, and if it should be possible for her and others in responsible positions to see that our conditions are improved, then its purpose has been well served.

LANDGIRL

FUTURE OF AUSTRIA

SIR,—I only got to-day your issue of the 6th inst. to hand, and I want to thank you for your sincere words about Austria. In the age of fast transport the creation of a country that can be crossed by an airplane in half an hour is an anachronism and invites only the appetite of bigger neighbours.

It was for economic reasons that the Austrian Socialdemokrats after the last war wanted to link Austria to Germany, thinking that the union with another German-speaking country would cause least administrative difficulties. Mainly economic reasons have been the cause of so many Austrians becoming Nazis later. Furthermore, if you ask an Austrian Monarchist what he finally expects from the Habsburgs he will tell you: "The return of those good old days, when we still had an Austrian-Hungarian Empire." And if you ask an honest Communist, he might admit that he wants an independent Austria for the sole purpose of making it a part of a Soviet Union as soon as possible.

The only people who are willing to bolster up the "independent Austria" (produced by Dr. Dollfuss—Fascist-Dictator Pocket-Edition) are those Austrians away from home, who cannot watch the various "Free Governments" without jealously wanting to play a similar role.

As warmly as every Englishman might wish for a decent living after the war—as warmly do I wish Austria to become part of a European Federation, Danube or otherwise, just for living's sake.

AN AUSTRIAN GULLIVER

SIR,—"Austrian J.S." has obviously misunderstood the lay-out of your editorial columns. I made no reference whatever to Austria in my Parliamentary Report on November 6.

PONTIFEX MINOR.
House of Commons.

FLOGGING

SIR,—I apologise for adding to the mass of correspondence on the subject of flogging, but I feel that the following shocking pronouncement by Chief Constable John Robertson, of Renfrewshire, should have wide publicity. Speaking at a Conference of Youth at Greenock's "Religion and Life" (!) Week he said: "Birching as it is done to-day does not appeal to me because it is not harsh enough. I do not think it is possible to draw blood with the birch now in use. If I had my choice I would use a green birch, and I would cut them with it."

I have noticed that of late the utterances of the "pro-floggers" are becoming increasingly brutal, but this specimen is in a class by itself. It is most disturbing that this kind of thing evokes no general protest. If we approve of it—or even if we are merely indifferent—what moral right have we to sit in judgment on any other nation? And what sort of "New Order" have we to look forward to? In the last chapter of "Philosophy and Living" Mr. Olaf Stapledon notes as one of the signs of a growing tendency to Fascism in Britain that "there are signs that approval of corporal punishment is increasing, along with morbid delight in the infliction of it. Everywhere we encounter the first symptoms of the movement from kindliness to 'firmness.'"

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BOOKS IN GENERAL

To be the intimate of Herbert Spencer; to converse on equal terms with the leading intellectuals of the day on philosophy, ethics and science; to be the guest of Dr. Jowett one day, and on another to find that the real pleasure of a visit to Cambridge lay "in talking with a hopeful group of young men in Trinity"—such, in her own opinion, was George Eliot's real achievement in the world of letters. She valued her abilities as an intellectual and a moralist far above her gifts as a novelist. The acts which caused her such suffering, her renunciation of belief in God or her decision to live with Lewes, were the result of considered deliberation rather than emotional crisis. She reasoned. She did not merely lose her faith; she replaced it with a new creed, Agnosticism. For the worship of God she substituted worship of the Good. Was it not more praiseworthy, more moral, to devote one's life to altruism, if one had no hope of reward in Heaven? If one was bad, well, the wicked paid in the end. She came to the same conclusion as Huxley: "I have not observed that beastliness, treachery and parricide are the direct way to comfort on earth." Moreover, it was as an intellectual that she impressed the most distinguished of her contemporaries. Perhaps the most dramatic account of the effect she produced is to be found in the famous description by F. W. Myers of a visit to Cambridge:—

> I remember how at Cambridge, I walked with her once in the Fellows' Garden at Trinity on an evening of rainy May; and she, stirred somewhat beyond her wont, and taking as her text the three words which have been used so often as the inspiring trumpet-call of men—the words God, Immortality, and Duty—pronounced with terrible earnestness how inconceivable was the first, how unbelievable the second, and yet how peremptory and absolute the third. Never, perhaps, have sterner accents affirmed the sovereignty of impersonal and unrecompensing Law. I listened and night fell, her grave, majestic countenance turned towards me like a sibyl's in the gloom; it was as though she withdrew from my grasp one by one the two scrolls of promise, and left me with the third scroll only, awful with inevitable fates. And when we stood at length and parted, amid that columnar circuit of the forest-trees, beneath the last twilight of starless skies, I seemed to be gazing, like Titus at Jerusalem, on vacant seats and empty halls—on a sanctuary with no presence to hallow it, and heaven left lonely of a God.

This was the severer aspect of her teaching.

Yes, it was severe; too severe for Myers who, shaken in his orthodoxy, ended by founding a society for psychical research under the presidency of Henry Sidgwick.

Such was her intellectual creed and such, the critics have assumed, is the purport of her novels. But, very occasionally, fragments come to us which suggest that she knew life could not be summed up in rational conclusions. She suffered from fits of terrible melancholy; a crucifix stood before her when she was translating Strauss's analysis of the Passion. Emerson was startled to find that one of her favourite books was Rousseau's *Confessions*, and the guests at a portentous party at the Sidgwicks' that she was addicted to black Bavarian beer.

This underlying conflict between feeling and intellect breaks through the surface of her greatest novel—perhaps the greatest English novel of the nineteenth century—*Middlemarch*. At first sight it appears exactly what we would have expected the George Eliot of the essays and letters to write. We see how the actions, right or wrong, of three sets of lovers bring their inevitable reward; through her penetrating eyes we watch them twisting facts to salve their consciences and writhing when their misdemeanours are brought home. "No nation," wrote Voltaire, "has treated in poetry moral ideas with more energy and depth than the English nation." We are indeed as a nation peculiarly gifted as moralists, and George Eliot is among the most outstanding. No more lucid account of her virtues and limitations exists than Lord David Cecil's in his brilliant study *Early Victorian Novelists*. But *Middlemarch* is great, not only because of her analysis of character, her great gift of telling a story which binds us to the pages; not even because it contains her greatest artistic creation, the beautiful, coy, egotistical Rosamund, the "sylph caught young and educated at Mrs. Lemon's"; but because it is pervaded by a quality, only latent in her earlier works, and born of the struggle between what her reason and her feelings told her was true: Compassion.

It is this quality, so conspicuous in the Russian novelists and absent from modern novelists, which transforms a provincial town into the world and shows the relation of the characters, not merely to themselves or to each other, but to the universe. It is displayed in the humour which lubricates her style: a humour which does not produce a set-piece figure of fun like Mrs. Poyser, but gently exposes human beings as so much less than they should be and all that they can hope to be. There is muddle-headed, puffing Mr. Brooke with his "I went into science a great deal myself at one time; but I saw it would not do." Mr. Brooke is an ass; he mismanages his estates, rack-rents his tenants and is pelted on the Hustings. Discussion with him is like arguing with a cuckoo-clock whose pendulum swings madly from one side of the argument to the other.

> I took in all the new ideas at one time—perfectibility now. But some say history moves in circles; and that may very well be argued; I have argued it myself. The fact is human reason may carry you a little too far—over the hedge in fact. It carried me a good deal at one time; but I saw it would not do. I pulled up; I pulled up in time. But not too hard . . . we must have thought; else we shall be landed back in the Dark Ages.

And so on. But we are made aware that alone among the gentry recommend that his niece Dorothea should freely follow her own mind. And though her satire bites deep into the morally degraded Waules and Cranches as they group round the death-bed of old Featherstone for his money, we are reminded that their degradation springs from their poverty, ill-health and bad luck.

But it is in the analysis of the main characters that her compassion is most powerfully displayed. The faults of the elderly desiccated scholar, Casanbon, whom Dorothea marries in girlish idealism, are many. He is pompous, priggish and touchy. He marries to get an obedient drudge to do hack-work. He brooks no criticism for her or his dependents and shrinks from the criticism of his intellectual equals. He commits a despicable act by disinheriting Dorothea in his will if she marries his young cousin Ladislaw. And yet we pity him. For George Eliot discerns that a scholar's life is full of gratuitous suffering. Not only is Casanbon sexually unattractive, he is despised by his fellow-men for being a milk-blooded scholar; he is driven apart from them—and thus driven into himself, so that he cannot impart to another soul his tortured feelings which therefore breed monsters in his own. This has made him what he is, and as a result prevents him from succeeding even as a scholar. That his subject is claptrap, that he has not read the German monographs, is relevant to Ladislaw, but not to George Eliot. She discerns that he suffers from the most painful malady which can attack scholars: the inability to commit themselves to paper. In her creation of Casanbon, who was partly inspired by Mark Pattison, she was not, as has been suggested, pillorying the accumulation of useless knowledge; she was writing about the implications of being a scholar.

Her most powerful study of moral retribution is that of Lydgate, the young doctor whose ambition to further medical science is sapped by his wife Rosamund. He is a victim of that self-deception engendered by desire which blinds the most vigorous and practical intellects. Only dimly does he at length apprehend the strength of her provincial snobbery, her obstinacy and self-satisfaction. We are left feeling that he was defeated by something stronger than intellect or goodness: stupidity and conceit. Whoever married Rosamund would have fared as he. We cannot condemn even the hypocritical, evangelical banker, Bulstrode, for so thoroughly does she expose the moral falsity of his soul that we pity him as we pity Angelo in *Measure for Measure*, just such another neurotic high-toned pillar of society whose inner nature is twisted by forces too strong for him.

And lastly Dorothea. She is the victim of self-delusion. George Eliot does not disguise how comical she finds this young idealistic prig. "Riding was an indulgence, which she allowed herself in spite of conscientious qualms; she felt she enjoyed it in a pagan sensuous way and always looked forward to renouncing it." Her common-sense sister Celia is always permitted to score off her. Young people who want to reform the world and burn with self-sacrifice are often comical and stuck-up; and as we watch Dorothea first marry Casanbon and then Ladislaw, we feel that the good-natured worldly people who would direct her for her own good—Sir James Chettam, or that amusing rattle Mrs. Cadwallader—who smile at her generous impulses and ideas, were right. They are the people who say many dashing and cutting words but never overstep the mark—who refer to the young as "going through a tiresome phase." We rather enjoy their company when we grow older, their easy manners, their loyalty and satire. But how we hate them when we are young!—how they blight our aspirations and strangle our hopes by their superior knowledge of the world. They prophesy that a young girl with ideals will make a fool of herself and a young doctor who will not compromise with medical cant will fail. And they are correct. Is this not, asks George Eliot, the nature of life, and are not human beings piteous if it is so?

Is this, then, merely the story of retribution and reward, of the effect of environment on character? Is it true that George Eliot is "kindly but just . . . with birchrod in hand to use as she thinks fit and lists of good and bad conduct marks pinned neatly on her desk"? No, it is not. This is the book of the agnostic, who writes with the crucifix before her, who reads the *Confessions*, who enjoys Bavarian beer. It is about the difference between self-deception and self-delusion; about the nature of honesty; about the torture of being young and idealistic and hoping to change the world for the better. It is not merely asking whether there is scope for self-sacrifice in a provincial town; it raises the whole question of the value of high thinking and serious endeavour. And she gives the answer. Though at the end of the book the mundane characters flourish, she leaves no doubt in our minds that it is better to be young, high-minded and wrong than worldly, practical and right. But she also admitted that the search for the true and the good brought suffering and sorrow; and as she sat alone, folded in melancholy, she wept that the workings of the universe brought agony and disillusionment to those who would transform it.

NOEL ANNAN

BALKAN UNDERGROUND

Escape from the Balkans. By MICHAEL PADEV. *Cassell*. 8*s*. 6*d*.

Another escaping journalist, harsh, experienced, battered, puts down his adventure and his opinions. From the outbreak of the war until 1941, when the Germans ceased to percolate and began openly to pour into Bulgaria, Mr. Michael Padev was *Times* correspondent in Sofia. He delayed his departure a day too long, the police got him out in the middle of the night, in a matter of hours he was being questioned by the Gestapo. The result was a year of captivity and then escape from the Balkans into Turkey on a forged passport. That year was crammed with diverse, bitter, horrifying but always interesting experience; at this remove of time, Mr. Padev is even able to see a little of it in a sardonic and humorous light. The main interest of the book lies in its picture of the resistance movement in the Balkans—Mr. Padev came across some of the parachutists dropped by the Russians—and in his own support of the Workers' Party and the Balkan federalists. He begs us to side with these people and not

with the extreme nationalists in exile or elsewhere; he also asks us not to be led away by anti-Red prejudice. For ten years or more Communism has been a useful bogy in the Balkans; it has been a blanket name for all the disenfranchised groups. And in siding with these so-called Communists in the present struggle, Mr. Padev believes that they alone can unify the Balkans and can avert civil war when the ruling oligarchies, Quislings and invaders have departed. This does not mean handing the Balkans to Russia. It means seeing the so-called Communists for the mixed but effective popular movement that they really are.

Mr. Padev's opinions are based on close experience of the underground resistance people in Bulgaria. Their stories and his own are very dramatic. Names and incidents have had, of course, to be changed or disguised; the only criticism one makes is that Mr. Padev occasionally becomes a novelist and describes dramatically many incidents which he could not have seen. He sees, for example, into the minds of two quarrelling Bulgarian or German officers; he puts down the supposed thoughts of a man who is being hanged. This is all right, but it is a great mistake for a journalist to mix the eye-witness and the conjectural methods. The reader is more impressed when he knows precisely where he is. This criticism made, the book is far above the average political narrative, and is packed with life and with valuable and subtly differentiated information.

The place which the Germans chose for their Bulgarian concentration camp was in the Rodope mountains, 4,000 feet up, and just above the legendary birthplace of Homer. These Bulgarians, Greeks, Serbs, Albanians, Croats and Russians were sent to freeze and watch the snow blow down into their soup pails. The guards seem not to have been too severe, indeed there were many instances of friendliness and laxity; but, as always in these camps, the absolutely horrible could and did occur from time to time. The revival of torture in Europe in the past ten years, a torture that is scientific and calculated, is the most nauseating part of contemporary history. If the worst comes to the worst, the mind is able to stand the sight or record of brutality after two major wars; but the ingenuity and sadism practised to-day by the rulers of Europe defeats the mind. The reader himself—we will say nothing of the torturer or his victim—finds his mind failing. In the Balkans the gypsies are employed as thugs and hangmen—those gypsies who, in another variant of the German New Order, are themselves officially mutilated and sterilised. Occupied Europe is indeed another Island of Dr. Moreau.

One would imagine that nothing but the fear of assassination could disturb the insane equanimity of the new Inquisitors. There is, however, a greater fear. Epidemics frighten them more than the knife in the back; and when typhus broke out in Mr. Padev's concentration camp the officials were stupefied with terror. Mr. Padev and some other conspirators got out of the camp via the filthy lavatories, and sent a message by the underground movement asking for official inquiry. The result was that a number of the prisoners were sent to a luxurious asylum. This journey of escape is admirably described. One of the factors on which the escaping party had not reckoned was their physical weakness; and six hours of mountain walking, not normally strenuous, nearly killed them. The leadership of the underground people has to be inexorably tough.

Many of Mr. Padev's portraits and stories are like extracts from fantastic literature. There is the curious tale of the poor woman prisoner who was regarded as a saint and whose sanctity terrified the guards. There is Sonya, the Bulgarian parachutist, a white-haired woman who had escaped execution, years before, because she had become pregnant, and who appears—though this is obscure in her story—to have ordered the murder of her lover who was also a prisoner. The murder itself reads like some Corsican vengeance. Mr. Padev's own final exit into Turkey is a breathless business, with farce, tragedy and misery attending it. Whether one picks up this book for its blunt and bitter tales and character studies, or for its account of Balkan politics, one does not easily put it down.

V. S. PRITCHETT

THE ART OF PLEASING

First Steps in Advocacy. By LEO PAGE. *Faber.* 6s.

This small book is of surprising interest to the general reader. Its purpose is to give practical advice to young barristers and solicitors and senior police officers; but having picked it up I was captivated by the author's clarity, wit and knowledge of human nature. In his previous works, *For Magistrates and Others*, *Crime and The Community* and *Justice of the Peace*, Mr. Leo Page has shown himself humane as well as learned. His new book is distinguished also by a worldly wisdom which never degenerates into cynicism.

He begins with a sensible discussion on the ethics of advocacy. Swift is quoted, defining lawyers as "a society of men bred up in the art of proving that black is white and white is black according as they are paid." The answer is duly taken from Dr. Johnson.

> A lawyer has no business with the justice or injustice of the cause that he undertakes, unless his client asks his opinion, and then he is bound to give it honestly. The justice or injustice of the cause is to be decided by the judge . . . A lawyer is to do for his client all that his client might fairly do for himself, if he could . . . If lawyers were to undertake no causes till they were sure they were just, a man might be precluded altogether from a trial of his claim, though, were it judicially examined, it might be found a very just claim.

It is difficult not to accept Dr. Johnson's argument, and if we agree that it is necessary for the good of society that the lawyer should use his skill to support a cause he believes to be bad, then he deserves the respect due to the man who does for the general benefit what we might hesitate to do ourselves. A famous XVIIIth century advocate, "Honest Jack Lee," quoted Dr. Johnson's verdict, just as Mr. Page does; but he concluded: "I am not quite so sure that the conduct you represented will bring a man peace to the last." (The story is told by Lord Eldon.)

In two sentences Mr. Page resumes the nature of advocacy. "The speaker who can make it appear to his audience that right is plainly on his side, and who can do this quite simply and naturally, exercises a great art . . . In a majority of cases with which a young advocate is entrusted, his success is proportionate to the degree in which he pleases his audience." Therefore, while giving valuable advice about the preparation of a case, the making of notes, the conduct of examination and cross-examination and re-examination, Mr. Page devotes the greatest attention to a less specialised business—the art of pleasing.

Here he necessarily follows in the steps of Lord Chesterfield and La Bruyère. Sometimes he reminds us even of the Edwardian mother's advice to her daughter: "Never be unkind to any of the other debutantes, however insignificant—you cannot be sure she will not marry a duke." Such worldly instructions are indeed very important to the young lawyer, for, as Mr. Page puts it:

> Even judges are human, and human likes and dislikes influence the discretion which judges exercise. Solicitors cannot be blamed if they prefer that the counsel whom they brief should not go into court with the judge prejudiced, even insensibly, against his case.

The ingenuous layman may suppose that if his case is good, and if the arguments that show it to be good are all put forward, he need have no anxiety about the verdict. This book should dispel such illusions. It shows very clearly how necessary it is to study the idiosyncrasies of the judge (p. 57); he discloses that by long-windedness (p. 73), by bickering (p. 59), by inappropriate clothes or bearing (p. 53), or even by reminding a judge of his deafness (p. 63), the counsel who is not a man of the world may prejudice the interests of his client. In order to please, he must remember that "it is seldom wise to offer a young theory to an old judge." And, indeed, so essential is tact that "on occasion it may assume legitimately enough the garb of humbug." Juries naturally are, even more than judges, affected by the personality of the advocate. If he is temperate and restrained, they may come to look upon him "as a person whose object is the discovery of the truth rather than as someone against whose propositions they should be on their guard." And this, one may add, is the delusion that the good advocate is most anxious to impose.

Anyone who feels shocked by such facts should consider whether he never seeks to use such arts himself. Nevertheless, the reading of this book is likely to make the layman highly averse from litigation, since he learns from it how easily his counsel, by a mistake not in law but in tact, may prejudice his interests. (And he will be wise to take this lesson all the more to heart, because the book has a commendatory foreword by the Lord Chancellor himself.) He will understand, moreover, why the best counsel can command such splendid fees. In a business so hazardous and so dependent on the art of pleasing, it must indeed be false economy to employ a counsel who is not an adept in this difficult art. But most of us are not prone to litigation, and what gives this book such general interest is the author's understanding of human weaknesses. We almost all depend largely for our happiness upon our power to understand other persons and to make ourselves agreeable. This primer can therefore be recommended not only to the young lawyer but to every young man and woman entering upon the complicated traffic of the world.

RAYMOND MORTIMER

A REACTIONARY

Who Are the People? By COLM BROGAN. *Hollis and Carter.* 8s. 6d.

Denis Brogan is a fair-minded and thoughtful writer. I began his brother's book in the hope that I should find the same qualities. The title of the book intrigued me. Ever since the last war I have been preoccupied with the conception of public opinion, its meaning and misuse by historians, journalists and politicians. A lot of honest work has been done on the subject and a lot more needs doing. There exists to-day at least a rudimentary technique for gauging public opinion; crude and inadequate though it still is, the work of psychologists and social scientists does enable a statesman or journalist to speak with some degree of accuracy when he refers to "the people." In that sense and practice democratic theory has advanced. It is a subject to which a number of able and stimulating writers have applied their minds.

But Mr. Colm Brogan is apparently unaware of any of this body of knowledge. He sets out to explode the pretensions of all "intellectuals," which means those writers and speakers who say things with which he does not agree. He writes as if nothing had happened to democracy since Jefferson and Bentham. There is nothing in his book to justify its title except some very amusing wisecracks in the first few pages. I read them with pleasure, assuming they were the introduction to something he had to say. But I found that he had nothing in mind except to score off people like Priestley and Laski. I do not know that either of these has put up in any special way to speak for the people; if they have, they can at least quote on their side the number of people who regard Priestley as the best political broadcaster and the number of voters who annually put Laski at the head of the poll when they choose the Labour Party Executive.

Mr. Brogan says that he intends to expose the credentials of the "clerks," he means the intellectuals—but he soon tires of the attempt. He is content with a few jokes, and is so careless of accuracy that when he wishes to attack the NEW STATESMAN AND NATION he evolves from his own inner consciousness a policy which he assumes we must have followed, and then, as it happens, mis-

presents what we have said. If he had written to us for some examples of confusion, mistaken interpretation or intellectual inadequacy from the columns of this paper, I expect I could have provided him with quite a merry list. But Mr. Brogan is a slap-dash writer which is a pity, because there are very few serious political thinkers about, especially amongst Conservatives, and I have no doubt that if Mr. Brogan would apply himself to the subject for a few years he might make a contribution of value.

The substance of Mr. Colm Brogan's book—substance it can be called—is a lengthy ridicule of the ideas of liberty, fraternity and equality. How this has been done in the past by powerful political thinkers and theologians. But men like de Maistre and Fitzjames Stephen had thought out their philosophic position before they began their polemic. So, oddly enough, had Dr. Goebbels when he declared that the Nazis, like Mr. Brogan, had set out to destroy the principles of the French Revolution. Dr. Goebbels was quite conscious that in attacking liberty and equality and fraternity he was undermining the basis of Western civilisation, and, incidentally, the foundations of the Christian religion. How far is Mr. Brogan conscious of what he is doing? Except for a revealing remark about censorship, Mr. Brogan does not let us into the secret of his own views about liberty. He is satisfied with the easy task of showing that its application is difficult, and that those who believe in liberty sometimes make mistakes. In dealing with equality (which, in the language of democracy, means not equality of ability, but equality of value), Mr. Brogan, as a Catholic, can scarcely belittle the conception of the Fatherhood of God. Similarly when he comes to Fraternity, which he seems to regard as the bequest of idle aspirations, he forgets that the alternative is a claim to racial or class superiority, which was anathema not only to the ideologues of the French Revolution, but also to the Apostle who said that in Christ there is neither Jew nor Gentile, bond nor free.

Mr. Brogan should stop and think what he wishes to substitute for the still rather common belief in the Brotherhood of Man.

KINGSLEY MARTIN

FANFARLO

Saving Through the Blitz. By G. W. STONIER. *Cape.* 6s.

At the end of the first chapter, I found myself saying, "This is very good, but he will not be able to keep it up." It surprised me, then, to find that on finishing the 125th and last page of rich prose and tenuous, plotless adventuring, that he had kept it up all through. For Mr. Stonier seemed hesitant at the beginning and, like a good critic, so aware of the sound of words, their hidden and their obvious meanings, the balance of sentence and paragraph, all the little tricks of taste and sensitiveness that he had been noticing in others in this periodical for years—he seemed indeed so nervous of cutting his throat (the story opens with the hero shaving), that I shivered with him. And it certainly is a wonder that such a full, tight-packed style, such effortless-seeming effort, does not cloy.

The story revolves round Mr. Fanfarlo, who is, I suppose, a typical NEW STATESMAN reader, and the lady he lives with. Not that I wish to imply that every reader of the NEW STATESMAN lives in sin, but rather to point out that this relationship of man and mistress deliberately helps to give the atmosphere of living in the present, the true atmosphere of the blitz. They both consider, at different times, marrying one another, but marriage, even by special licence, seems looking too far ahead. People drift in—Mrs. Greenbaum from next door with her pom. and her preoccupation with the occult, Captain Spandrill, a military bore of a high order, Jimmie, a mass-observer subsequently in military intelligence, a Mr. and Mrs. Stevens. They are the inhabitants of Herpes Street, London, and the Fanfarlo's have the best shelter at this, the wrong end of it. It is the sense of day-to-dayness, of getting to know strangers whom one would never ordinarily meet, that not only gives the book its authenticity but turns it into an adventure story exciting in its inconsequence.

But, being a critic's carefully constructed writing, every page has a bomb of a sentence on it which pulls you up short with respect. "Then, Hitler has been making all his old mistakes again. Will he never learn? When will it dawn on him that he can never surprise us by taking us by surprise? . . . With more and more miles of empty coastline to defend, and fewer and fewer countries left to occupy, his situation is rapidly growing desperate." Or this beautiful list of stations, clearly reached from either London Bridge or Fenchurch Street. "Gales (begins the voice), Pingorm, Wattlepoop . . . Bishops Banting, Rory Swithins, Oxtail, Much Tupping, Polecats and Sodding, Nimbus, Potto, Little Merds, Typing-on-the-Sly, Smeeth, Swurl, Sex-how, and Sundry Steeples." Or this recognisable Brains Trust conversation. "'Ne-ces-sar-y' he enunciates, "'to whom? How and why necessary? To the Om-ni-pot-ent or to you and me? Speaking for the Omnipotent I should say indubitably yes; for surely he would not have created the fly unless it was ne-ces-sar-y for him to abide by the error in order to maintain omnipotence?'"

But it is hard, by picking on quotations, to do full justice to the richness of the book. That richness consists in the contrast of the sadness of war and its humour: the waste of physical energy and the intensity of emotional experience: all can be suggested or directly stated on a single page by Mr. Stonier, without giving a sense of over-crowding.

Perhaps the nearest approach to an adequate quotation to illustrate the contrast comes from these two descriptions of a blitz—each clear to those who have experienced it and each corresponding to our two moods about it:

> There it is, the Blitz, all night and half the day, mooching round, coming and going, sniffing and grunting, throwing up showers of gravel against the windows, as though one had accommodated too big a dog in the garden.

Compare this with

> Earth and sky contract to form the arena: the city puts up its searchlights, a beetle laid on its back and helplessly wavering its legs, while the hornet drones overhead; night after night the assailant returns, the victim quivers with upturned belly.

I do not know whether hornets attack beetles, but I do know that a better description of life in London during the earlier part of the war is unlikely to appear in so sensitive, tolerant and readable a form.

JOHN BETJEMAN

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The Chinese Shawl. By PATRICIA WENTWORTH. *Hodder and Stoughton.* 8s. 6d.

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Mother Finds a Body. By GYPSY ROSE LEE. *John Lane.* 7s. 6d.
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Dinner in New York. By SYDNEY FOWLER. *Eyre and Spottiswoode.* 8s. 6d.
Murder is So Simple. By SYDNEY HORLER. *Eyre and Spottiswoode.* 8s. 6d.

When bread is diluted with potato-flour and sausages are bolstered up with soya beans, that staple article of Anglo-Saxon diet, detection, need not expect too severe an analysis. As I cannot recommend the quality of the autumn crop, I would draw attention to the vast quantity still available with some semblance of merit: none of which, however, is sufficiently remarkable to require much comment.

The Chinese Shawl is the leisurely story of a lady shot at dead of night in a country house while gripping the fringe of someone else's shawl. There have been hundreds of stories like it; and there will be hundreds more, for country house material drapes itself into detective plots almost automatically. Miss Wentworth writes in the old-fashioned style with smooth narrative and no straining for effect; but she dips her fingers so greedily into love-interest that the reader feels sticky all over. The detective is the elderly spinster who calls policemen by their Christian names and knits her way to a solution. Many will think the pace too slow, but should not let their impatience deprive them of the subtlety of an extremely well worked out crime.

Miss Seeley enjoys a considerable reputation for her first four books, but she will soon lose it unless she moderates her style. *Eleven Came Back* is so overlaid with pretentiousness that it is hard to disentangle the plot from the fine writing and local colour. Murder follows murder on a dude ranch in the wilds of Wyoming, where a Red Indian millionaire lives in feckless splendour as the third husband of a wolfish lady from New York. There are glimpses of character and moments of excitement, to remind us of Miss Seeley's undoubted talent, but the over-writing is continuous from start to spectacular finish.

The Bradfield Case is by a new author belonging to the Wills Crofts school. The General Manager of an Insurance Company without an enemy in the world is shot in the first-class carriage of a train to King's Cross. So far as is known, only two persons knew he was travelling by that particular train; and they were at the other end of England at the time of the murder. Moat, Mr. Graystone's detective, is the *alter ego* of Inspector French, and hunts for a clue with the dogged pertinacity we know so well. But not until two-thirds of the way through the book does he find one. A sound plot, without a single loose end, but solved alas! in slow motion.

Private detectives in California are all supermen, and therefore indistinguishable except for their hobbies. Simon Crole in *Murder Comes to Dinner* is greedy over food; and *Simon Lash* is greedy for first editions of Americana. At break-neck speed amid the din of wisecracks and fire-arms, Lash solves the murder of a banker leading a quadruple life, and Crole the shooting of a detective at an official police banquet. I can't separate the two books, and defy anyone to tell them apart; but if they are by the same author, then there is one man in Los Angeles dictating into fifty dictaphones simultaneously in a perpetual state of artificial exuberance. I don't believe it.

Murder and Music is only for the short-sighted. The type is enormous and well spaced, and the size of the book proves that there can be no paper shortage in Dublin, where it is printed. People with keener eyesight may find detection in Ireland in a very backward stage. But what can you expect of a country where they still call policemen "peelers," where detectives address each other as "Old Crow" and "Young Cock," and where extreme unction has to be administered to every murderer before anything else happens? Mr. Gerald Lee has thought up a way of murdering a musician playing his piano alone in a locked room. It is ingenious *à la* Dickson Carr, but I doubt if it would work. Why doesn't he try "Murder by Extreme Unction" in nice, big print?

American Detective Stories range from Poe (*The Purloined Letter*) to Eberhart. On what principle these seven short stories have been selected to represent America is obscure—even to their introducer, Mr. Maurice Richardson of *The Observer*. Four of them I was familiar with, but I would not have classed them high enough to anthologise. After the Poe, which is superb, the best is the Dashiel Hammett, *A Man Called Spade*. The rest are very readable, light stuff.

The Knife Will Fall is a Saturnin Dax thriller, loaded with Parisian *chichi*. Probably it should be relegated to the Third Eleven, but it was the only "exotic" I could rake up for this list. On an average, there is a French word or phrase to each page, which may produce nostalgia in sympathetic readers. The killer of four victims, each labelled with a playing-card, comes from Devil's Island. *Oh, la la!*

Gypsy Rose Lee is the strip-tease lady who has sold thousands of copies of her first *Strip-tease Murders*. The strip-tease party go on tour in a caravan in *Mother Finds a Body*, and the fun is not quite so fast but more furious than ever. (The G-strings and net-pants are still with us, but are not diverted from their proper use for purposes of murder.) The publishers acclaim this work as a "natural," and if that means what it should mean, I agree. I recommend it heartily to surrealists.

Miss Mitchell does her best to represent English surrealism. *Sunset Over Soho* seems to centre round a body in a coffin, which starts its career somewhere up the Thames and eventually comes to earth in an air-raid shelter in Soho, having apparently dropped out of a church. Someone takes part in the evacuation of Dunkirk, and someone else takes a trip to the Canary Islands. No incident is ever explained, and there are plenty of incidents; while Mrs. Bradley lords it over all. This must be the deepest of Miss Mitchell's constructions, as even her most ardent fans have been unable to fathom its beauties.

Dinner in New York is a welcome change—a straight thriller of a respectable English bank chairman becoming involved with the Al Capone gang in Chicago. Very lively, exciting and well written—just what a thriller should be.

The last book on the list is a crime novel, based on the performances in real life of "Brides in the Bath" Smith. All crime novels I find intensely readable, and Mr. Horler makes the characters in his sordid story grotesquely plausible. But the crucial moment in *Murder is so Simple* is not at all simple; and I was most disappointed to find Mr. Horler skating over it without any attempt at explanation. How do you drown not one, but a succession of strong, healthy young women in a short bath, without leaving a trace of violence on their bodies and without their uttering any sound but a gurgle? The police were always mystified about that, and "B. in the B." Smith took the real secret of his technique with him to the grave. RALPH PARTRIDGE

Week-end Competitions

No. 721

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uld be addressed to COMPETITIONS, 10 Great rnstile, W.C.1. Solutions must reach the Editor first post on Monday, December 6th.

2. The Editor's decision is final. He reserves right to print in part or as a whole any matter in, whether it be awarded a prize or not. MSS. not be returned. When no entries reach the uired standard no prize will be awarded.

ESULT OF COMPETITION No. 718

by C. Urchin

The usual prizes are offered for six new proverbs.

port by C. Urchin

Asking for new proverbs, one gets a few among old overbs revised, topical wisecracks, epigrams, apophegms, *pensées*. "You can't hope to keep clean hands a Black Market." "There's more under the nter than meets the eye," "Cut your coat according your coupons," "It doesn't do to rely on someone e's torch." These, in one guise or another, turn again and again, and represent, I suppose, strictly proverbial wisdom that has flowed this week ough the turnstile. They are of the "authentic, ewd, sub-cynical" sort referred to by "Don nne," who sends in two entries, one popular and personal. However, I had no intention to be ict, and almost any kind of saying provided it nes, has had the chance of winning. There is a alth of topicality, shrewdness, satire, wisdom, and n elegance. In the aggregate, competitors (now a y and impressive body) have done themselves tice; though few managed to produce a satistory set of six. Good twos and threes abounded. nley J. Sharpless succeeds with quantity as well as ality and deserves, I think, to share a first prize of o guineas with Leon M. Shirlaw, whose languages must take on trust. The second prize of two ineas is divided equally between E. W. F., R. Drik, R. Latham, Gerald Challis, Towanbucket, Sir bert Witt, F. C. C., and Pibwob.

When theology goes out by the door, ideology flies in at the window.

It is easy to buy a battery on Midsummer Day.

Observe not the chinks in your neighbour's black-out.

The beautiful bomb looks different from underneath.

The dusty Plan and the shelved Report make the people rage.

The way to the Delectable Mountains is known as Civvy Street.

Terrible as a committee with blue-prints.

STANLEY J. SHARPLESS.

1. FRENCH: L'eau de Vichy ne va pas bien avec l'eau de Vie.

2. POLISH: Kochać Ojczyzney, to nie dosyć, treba nienawidzieć Moskali.

3. GERMAN:

Wenn er auch noch so hungrig ist, darf ein Deutcher sich nicht die Nagel beissen.

Ess Kaun noch immer sich, aus einen gebombten Kelle, auszukratzen heissen.

4. AMERICAN: Don't forget that the British are our Allies, not our enemies.

5. ENGLISH: This war has taught us a lot; let's forget it as quick as possible.

6. RUSSIAN: Bebnych rodstvennikov pryglashayout daesh v gostinnouyou na tshy, yesli oni silny ee veliki.

TRANSLATIONS.

1. Vichy water does not mix well with brandy (life-water).

2. It is not enough to love one's Fatherland; you must also hate the Russians.

3. Even if he be ever so hungry, a German must not bite his fingernails. He may need them to dig himself out of a bombed cellar.

6. Poor relations are even asked to the front room for tea if they are strong and big.

LEON M. SHIRLAW

The bucket calls the well "unfaithful."

DON JONNE

A fireside general loses no battles.

A guest without ration is a guest out of fashion.

It's an ill curtain that won't make a skirt.

E. W. F.

Perversity makes strange bed fellows.

R. CECIL OWEN

The parrot does not believe all he says.

F. G. MESSERVY

The frog will croak, though God has made the nightingale.

If God had made the world perfect man would have reformed it. R. DRIK

Who bites the carpet must needs bite the dust.

LITTLE BILLEE

One brilliant talker in company may offend like a light in the black-out. HESSELL PITMAN

'Twill be a wise Beveridge who knows his own report. J. & J.

History caricatures itself.

A five-pound note has no effect on a sixpenny slot-machine. R. S. JEFFREY

World wars butter no bread.

Take care of your pence; the State will take care of your pounds.

Never hate your enemy; he may be your co-belligerent. W. R. LATHAM

The cock crows, but the hen lays the eggs.

OLRIC

The emptier a man's head, the more his tongue rattles in it. S.

The fortunate always believe in a just Providence

IRENE WILLIAMS

Don't join a queue unless you know what's at the end of it.

You can't tell a sausage by its skin.

The road to chaos is paved with good reports.

GERALD CHALLIS

Don't count your White Papers before they become law. ELIZABETH DUNN

Rome is not reached in a day.

MRS. D. S. WALKER

The fighter calls the bomber slow. N. B.
It's a high flier who never sees flak.

C. R. L.

Second thoughts in the train are better than impulse in the taxi. MISS D. N. DAGLISH

A fool and his queue are soon joined.

Even a tank can't climb a tree.

A bomb on the target is worth two in the neck.

TOWANBUCKET

Listeners-in always hear good of themselves.

PER SE

A butterfly lives long enough. LUCIFER

Rations are based on Reason, and are therefore small.

As fallacious as the Brains Trust.

The Civil Servant must not become an uncivil master. SIR ROBERT WITT

She who does the most washing-up will break most dishes. RICHARD POMFRET

One divorce costs more than fifty marriages.

BILL HOPPER

As snug as a Tory in a coalition.

D. W. BARKER

The crunching of a man's own toast is louder than God's own thunder.

No ink is as red as blood.

The swan's sore throat was worse than the sparrow's. F. C. C.

The fire that melts lead tempers steel.

PHIZ

Two in a hurry catch the same ambulance.

A patriot is known by his income-tax returns.

Appetite was discovered before vitamins.

PIBWOB

Every black-out has its chinks.

DOUGLAS HAWSON

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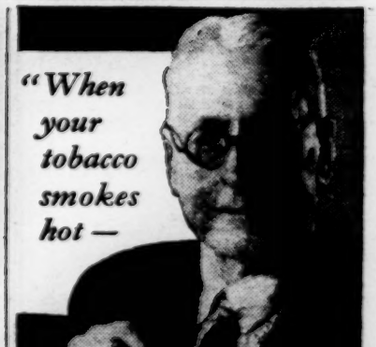

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